MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated
Encyclopedia
of Mythology, Religion
and the Unknown

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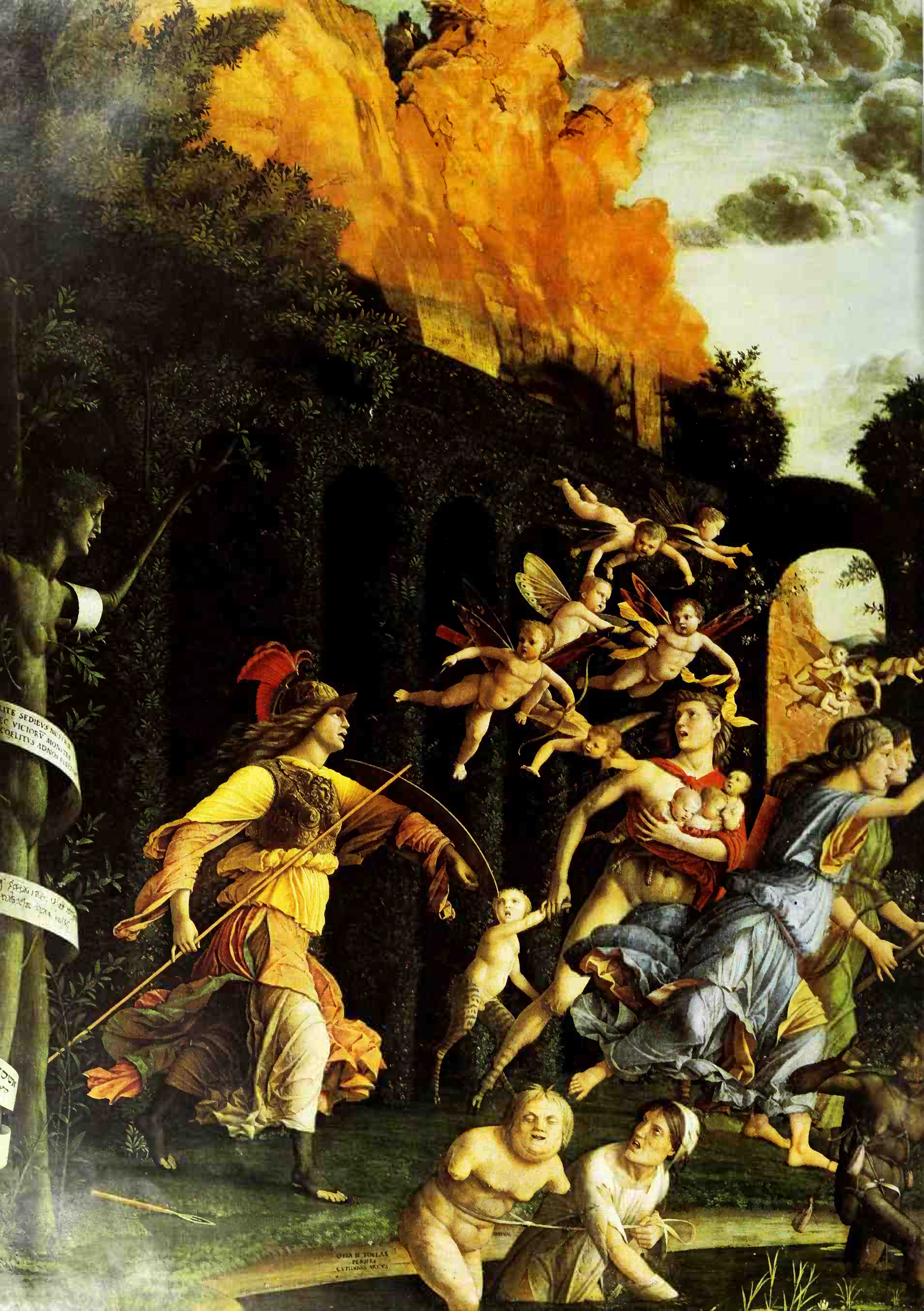
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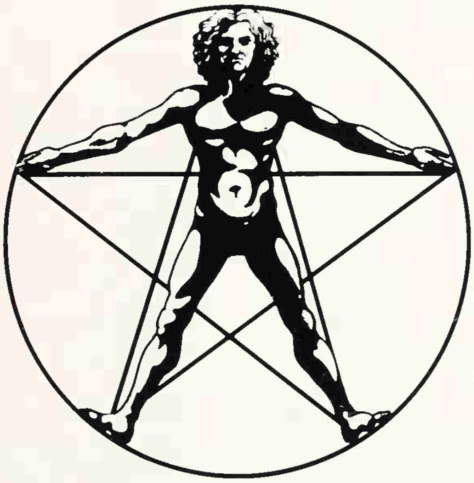

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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Frontispiece: The antipathy between good and evil was a popular Renaissance theme: detail from an allegorical painting by Andrea Mantegna, showing the warlike Minerva, virgin goddess of arts and learning, driving the spawn of vice from the Garden of Virtue. (Scala)

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EGYPT

The sun's disc was to be worshipped before all the animal-headed gods of Egypt. So declared the Pharaoh Akhenaten, in one of the most remarkable episodes in the 3000 year history of Egyptian religion

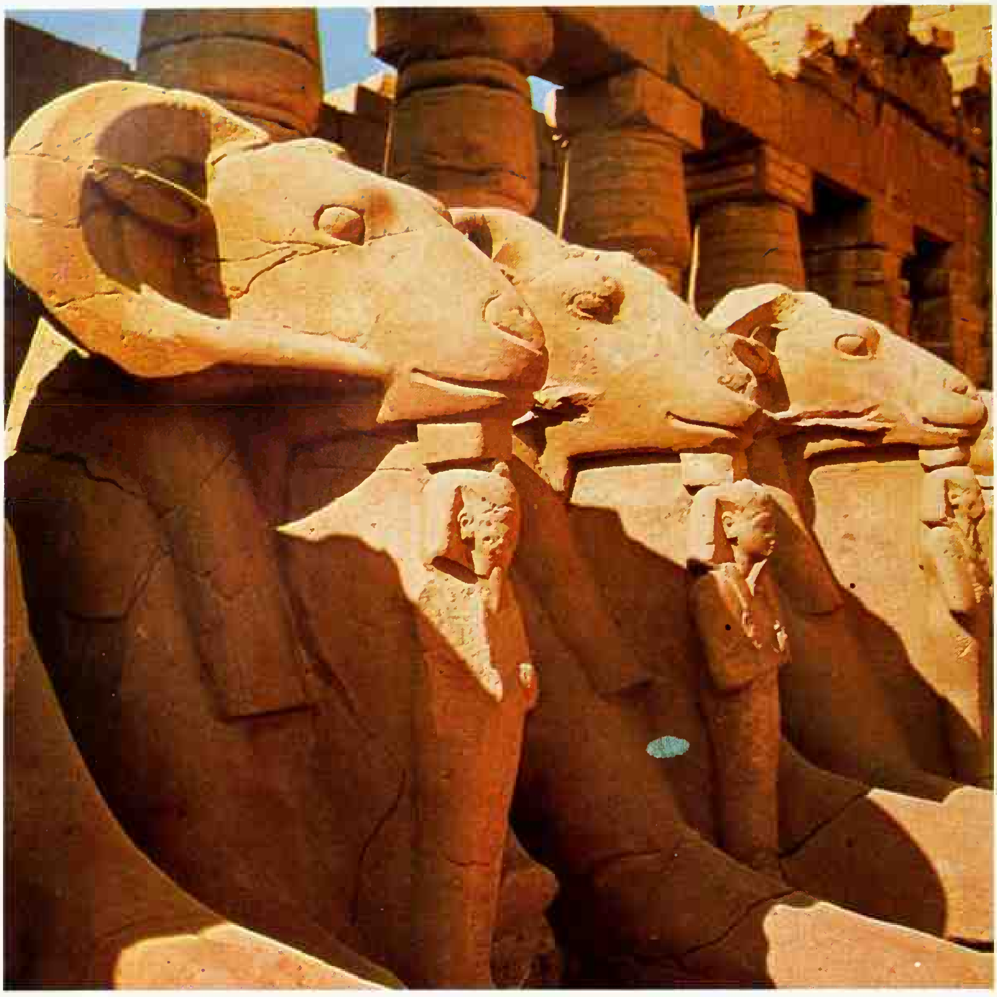
TWO FACTORS have conspired to give ancient Egypt its unique appeal: its religion and the fact that its climate has so wonderfully preserved the relics of this religion for us. Religion permeated the whole life both of the individual Egyptian and of Egyptian society. It found expression in such a rich variety of forms that Egyptian religion provides the best introduction to the historical and comparative study of religion. Almost every aspect of religious faith and practice is found in this ancient religion: polytheism, henotheism (the worship of a single god), monotheism (belief that there is only one God), mythology, magic, ritual, divine kingship, mighty temples and mysterious tombs, a professional priesthood, illustrated religious texts, a wisdom literature and religious scepticism. It also embraced the most elaborate funerary cult, magical resurrection and a complex afterlife, and the earliest conception of a judgement after death. Although now extinct, Egyptian religion was the longest-lived religion yet recorded; it was already in being in 3000 BC and it survived until the forcible suppression of pagan cults by the Christian emperor Theodosius in 384.

Egyptian religion is well documented. There is an abundance of texts inscribed on the walls of tombs, temples, obelisks, statues and stelae (stone memorial slabs), or painted on coffins or written on papyrus scrolls. They range in date from the Pyramid Texts of c 2400 BC (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) to texts of the 4th century AD.

Above Three _ankhs_ or looped crosses, worn by the living as charms to prolong life and buried with the dead to ensure their resurrection, are carried by the goddess of happiness in a procession of gift-bearing gods. Bas relief of about 2700 BC _Following page_ The goddess Isis spreads out her winged arms in a protective gesture, at the foot of a gold coffin enclosing the mummy of Tutankhamen. Isis was often depicted as a guardian of the dead

Werner Forman

Sue Gooders


Michael Holford

Left **An avenue of ram-headed sphinxes led to the great temple of Amun-Re at Karnak near Thebes. The ram was the symbol of Amun and his soul was believed to be enshrined in a ram-headed sphinx, the embodiment of wisdom, mystery and power *Right* Souls pay homage to the sun god Re, whom the Egyptians conceived under various imaginative forms. As Re-Harakhti he was associated with an ancient sky god and was depicted as a falcon or falcon-headed man crowned with the sun's disc. Detail from the Papyrus of Anhai in the British Museum *Far right* On the same papyrus the sun god is shown in another form, as the beetle Khepri with the solar disc; the scarab beetle was thought to be born spontaneously and therefore became an apt symbol for the rising sun**

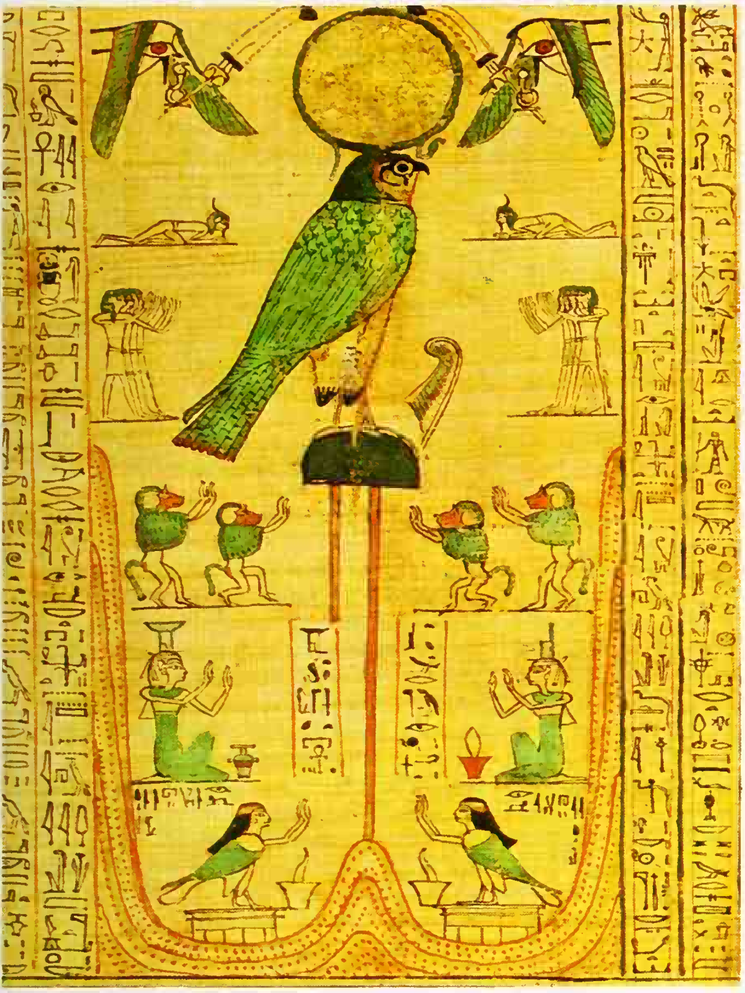
Monuments such as pyramids, temples and tombs have often been so well preserved that their ritual use can be easily traced. Temples and tombs were adorned with ritual scenes, and tombs with depictions of the underworld, all of which provide a vivid picture of Egyptian deities, worship and belief about the next world.

The immense duration of Egyptian religion makes it necessary to know something of the course of Egyptian history, especially since Egyptologists use their own chronological scheme in making reference to various periods. This scheme is founded on a dynastic framework; the dynasties concerned are royal, but it is not certain why the various groups of monarchs are so related to each other. The dates given here are approximate, since only rarely can an Egyptian date be definitively established. The Thinite Period (3200–2780 BC), comprising Dynasties 1–2, marks the beginning of the united kingdom of Upper and Lower Egypt under pharaonic rule. The Old Kingdom (2780–2280 BC), comprising Dynasties 3–6, was the pioneering period of Egyptian civilization, known as the Pyramid Age. The First Intermediate Period (2280–2052 BC), comprising Dynasties 7–10, was a time of social revolution when royal power was seriously weakened. At the time of the Middle Kingdom (2052–1778 BC), comprising Dynasties 11–12, the political centre had moved to Thebes in Upper Egypt; this was a period of great literary activity. The Second Intermediate Period (1778–1567 BC), Dynasties 13–17, was a time of national eclipse, when Egypt was subjugated by Asiatic invaders. The New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC), Dynasties 18–20, was the period of Egypt's greatest imperial expansion; Tutankhamen was a minor king of the 18th Dynasty. The Late Period (1085–330 BC), Dynasties 21–30, was a period of national decline, when Egypt suffered from Assyrian and Persian invasions; the last native Egyptian pharaoh was Nectanebo (359–341 BC). During the Ptolemaic or Hellenistic Period (330–30 BC), Egypt was ruled by Greek (Macedonian) monarchs, the last of whom was the famous Cleopatra. After her death, Egypt was incorporated into the Roman Empire; this was the Roman Period (30 BC–641 AD). The main pattern of its religion continued, with the Roman emperors taking the place of the pharaohs, until it was finally suppressed in favour of Christianity in 384 AD. Certain elements of the ancient faith passed into Coptic Christianity, which survived the Islamic conquest of Egypt in 641 AD and the subsequent conversion of the Egyptian people to Islam.

Two natural features have always dominated life in Egypt, namely, the River Nile and the sun; from them stemmed two of the basic themes of ancient Egyptian religion. Egypt has been aptly described as a land having length but no breadth. The description is not quite accurate, because the Delta area is certainly extensive; but south of Cairo, Egypt really consists of two strips of irrigable land on either bank of the Nile, with the desert stretching away on each side. The land consequently divides into two distinctive parts: Lower Egypt, comprising the Delta area, and Upper Egypt, formed of the long narrow Nile valley. The fertility of the land depends absolutely upon the annual flooding of the Nile and the careful control and conservation of its life-giving waters. This entails the construction and maintenance of elaborate irrigation works. Consequently a strong centralized government, uniting Upper and Lower Egypt under one rule and able to direct the country's labour resources, has always been essential to the economic and social well-being of the people. Such a government was first established about 3000 BC by princes of This, in Upper Egypt, and the achievement was so important that the Egyptians looked back to this union of Upper and Lower Egypt as the starting point of their national life.

Pharaoh, the God on Earth

Because the pharaoh (a title derived from *per* meaning 'house' and *aa* meaning 'great') was so essential to the well-being of the land, he came to be regarded as divine. According to a tradition that arose in the Old Kingdom, he was believed to be son of the sun god, and therefore the deity's representative upon earth. The pharaoh was accordingly regarded as the owner of Egypt (in Egyptian *Kemi*, the 'black land'), and the mediator between the people and the sun god. A royal insignia and ritual proclaimed his unique status. When he died,



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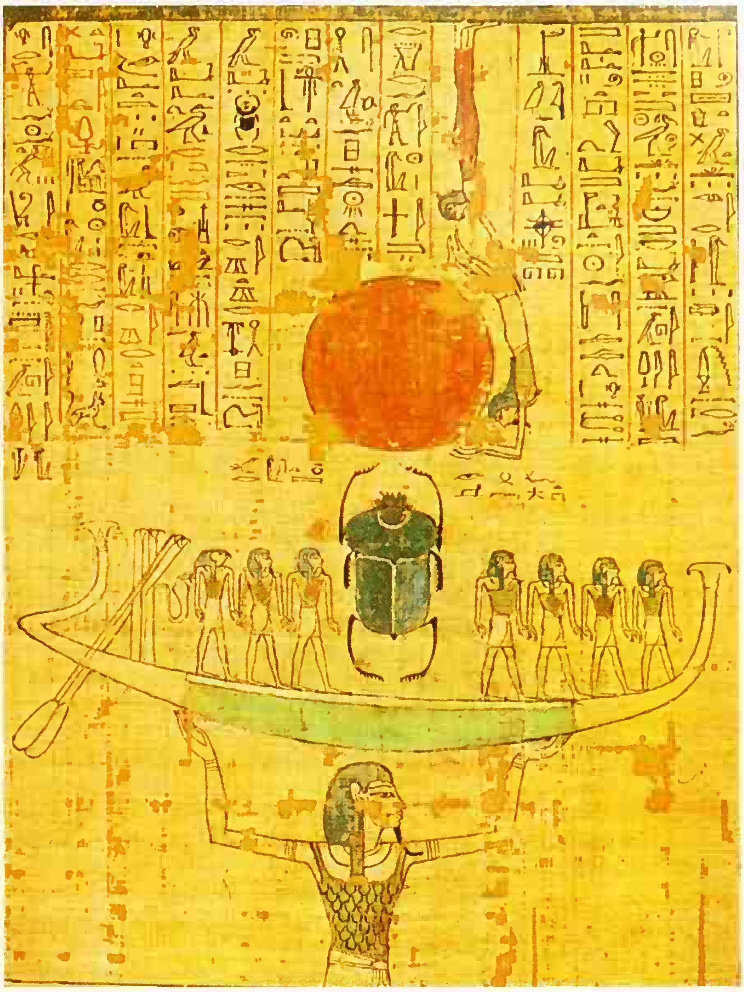


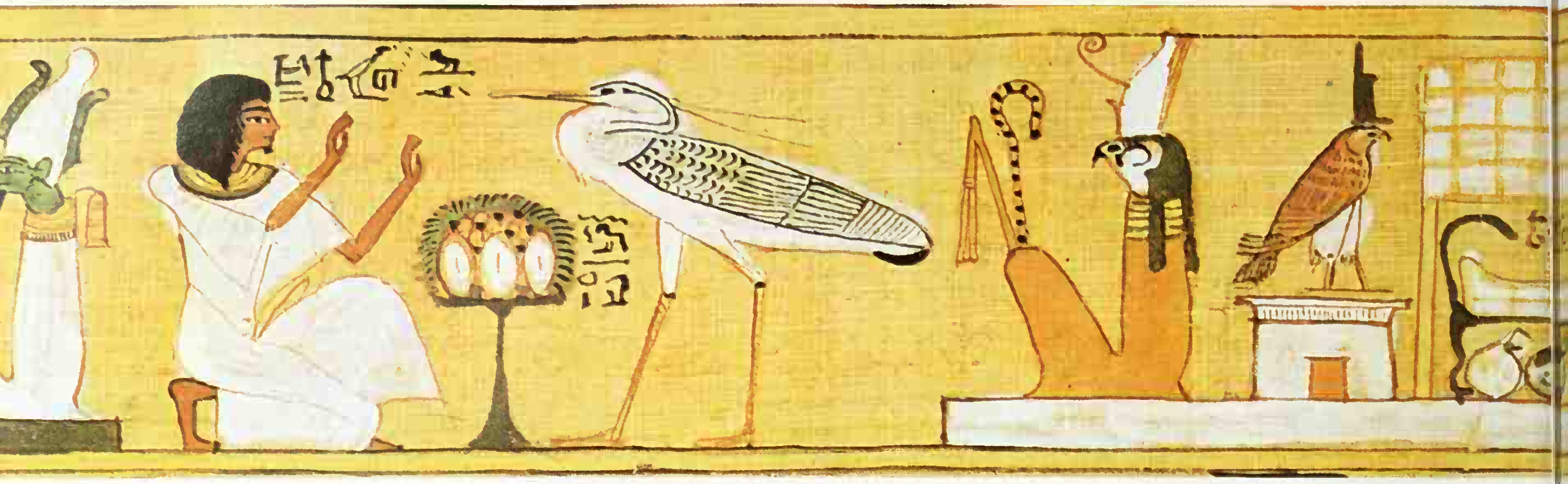
Michael Holford

Two natural features have always dominated life in Egypt, the River Nile and the sun; from them stemmed two of the basic themes of ancient Egyptian religion

or rather ascended to the sky to join his divine father, his body had to be enshrined in a great tomb, served by a mortuary temple. The pyramids were the distinctive tombs of the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom.

Because the sun so insistently dominates the daily scene in Egypt, it was venerated under the name of Re (Egyptian-Coptic for 'sun') as the supreme state deity, intimately associated with the monarchy. Known as the 'Great God', Re was conceived under various highly imaginative forms. As Re-Horakhti, an ancient falcon or falcon-headed sky god called 'Horus of the horizon' was associated with the sun god. Re-Horakhti was represented in art as a falcon-headed man, crowned with the solar disc; sometimes this form of the deity was depicted as the solar disc, encircled by two serpents, between the outstretched wings of a falcon. As the sun at dawn, Re was represented as a beetle (*Khepri*) or a beetle-headed man. This strange concept had a subtle significance. 'Khepri' derived from the word *kheper*, meaning 'to become or exist', so that Re-Khepri indicated both the rising sun and the sun as the self-existent creator of the universe. The declining sun was Re-Atum, shown as an aged man of wise counsel; the word 'Atum' conveyed some idea of 'completion'. Atum was the god of Heliopolis, the old centre of sun worship.

Since Re, as the state god, was essentially connected with the kingship of the pharaohs, it was inevitable that his cult should be affected by political changes in Egypt. During the Old Kingdom period, he was worshipped as Re-Atum in his ancient home at Heliopolis, where his temple was supposed to mark the primeval hill where he began the work of creation. When the political capital was moved to Thebes in Upper Egypt, during the Middle Kingdom, Re was associated with the local god of Thebes, Amun. Amun-Re was represented in art as a man wearing a cap, surmounted by two plumes and the solar disc. The great pharaohs of the New Kingdom were zealously devoted to Amun, building at Thebes for his worship huge temples, richly endowed, so that Amun became in effect the sole state god. This exaltation of Amun eventually produced one of the most interesting, though obscure, episodes in the whole of Egyptian history.



The Heretic King

It would seem that the priests of Heliopolis, the ancient cult centre of Re-Atum, attempted to combat the exaltation of Amun by promoting the worship of Re untrammelled by association with another god. Accordingly they proclaimed the Aten, the sun's disc, as the symbol of supreme deity. Meanwhile at Thebes the enormous power acquired by the priesthood of Amun had begun to challenge the royal power. When Amenhotep IV (1372–1354 BC) ascended the throne, he gradually set about supplanting Amun as the supreme deity by the Aten. This king, who soon changed his name to Akhenaten ('Pleasing to the Aten'), was a strange genius whose devotion to the Aten bordered on fanaticism. He moved his capital from Thebes, the stronghold of Amun, to a new city named Akhetaten ('Horizon of the Aten'), where he built a magnificent temple to his god, similar in plan to that at Heliopolis. He expressed his devotion in hymns to the Aten and he had himself frequently portrayed, together with his beautiful wife Nefertiti and their children, worshipping the Aten, whose descending rays, ending in hands, bless the pious family. He took measures to repress the cult of Amun, even to the point of causing the deity's name to be removed from monuments. However, the attempt to reform Egyptian religion did not survive the heretic king, and his successor Tutankhamen (1354–1345 BC) was obliged to submit to Amun's supremacy and bring the court back to Thebes. The memory of Akhenaten was execrated and his monuments destroyed. The ascendancy of the Amun priesthood reached its inevitable conclusion in about 1080 BC when Herihor, the 'First Prophet of Amun', took over the royal power at Thebes. (See also IKHNATON.)

The third main theme of Egyptian religion was constituted by the funerary cult which centred on the god Osiris. This was essentially concerned with the spiritual needs of individuals, which were not served by the state religion. Osiris, the divine hero who died and rose again, had an intimate personal appeal and, since it was believed that resurrection to eternal life could be achieved through ritual assimilation to him, he came increasingly to dominate Egyptian religion; his cult was the longest lived of all those of the Egyptian deities.

The earliest texts record a multiplicity of gods and goddesses. The majority were local deities but some achieved a nationwide recognition. Amun is a case in point: the political supremacy of Thebes made him the supreme state god. Most local deities, like Bast, the cat goddess of Bubastis, and Sebek, the crocodile god of the Faiyum, had their chief sanctuary in their place of origin, with which they remained essentially associated; sometimes their cult might be accorded a limited observance in one or two other places. The origin of these local deities is unknown. The fact that many of them had animal forms or animal heads has suggested the theory of their derivation from ancient totems; but there is no certain evidence that totemism existed as an institution in early Egypt, and many other local deities cannot be explained in this way.

Of the major deities after Re, Osiris and Amun, whose worship was generally observed throughout the land, Horus and Isis enjoyed the widest recognition. Horus was a complicated deity who, under certain forms, achieved the status of a state god. His solar aspect as Re-Horakhti, under which he was associated with Re the sun god, was paralleled by another of equal importance but of confusing significance, especially since the two aspects became combined in one single deity. In the Osirian mythology Horus is the posthumous son of Osiris, who avenges his father's death and inherits his kingdom. Since the Egyptians identified a deceased king with Osiris, and his son and successor with Horus, the latter came to be regarded as the divine prototype of the reigning pharaoh.

In the Osirian mythology the god Seth figures as the murderer of Osiris and the opponent of Horus, who finally overthrows him. This god, who seems originally to have been associated with storms and the desert, and so regarded as a strong and fierce being, gradually became the Egyptian god of evil. Seth is generally depicted as an animal-headed man. The animal has never been certainly identified; it has a long curved muzzle, almond eyes and sharp pointed ears. The Greeks later identified Seth with the monster Typhon.

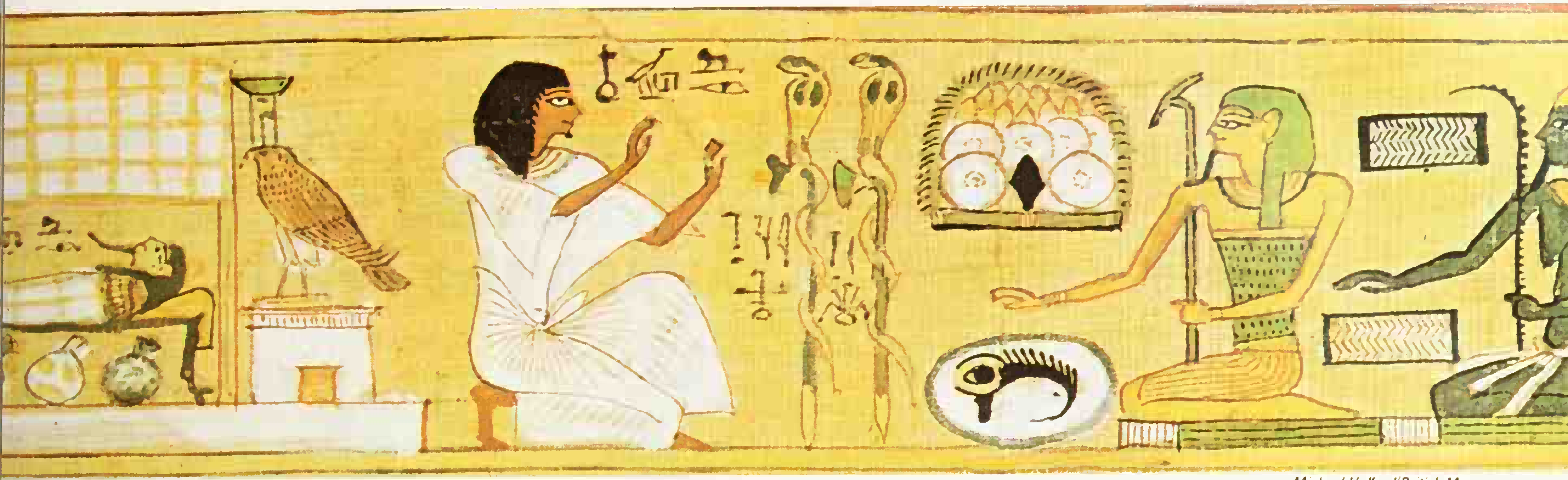
The other chief deity of the Osirian mythology who can claim to have become, with Osiris, one of the two most popular deities of Egyptian religion, and later of Graeco-Roman society, was the goddess Isis, the wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, the daughter of Geb and Nut.

Ptah, the god of Memphis, always enjoyed a position of dignity in the Egyptian pantheon, because Memphis had been the ancient capital of the land and continued an important city. He is represented in art invariably in human form, tightly wrapped in a robe like a mummy; he wears a skull cap and holds a curiously shaped staff or sceptre. The priests of Memphis attributed to him the creation of all things, including the other gods. Memphis was also the cult centre of the Apis bull, a primitive symbol of procreative vitality, which was associated with Ptah as the manifestation of 'his blessed soul'; later the Apis was also associated with Osiris.

Hathor was a widely popular goddess, who manifested herself in various forms. As a beautiful woman, she was the divine patron of music and dancing, symbolizing the joy of life. In a bas relief at Karnak, recording the divine birth of the pharaoh Amenhotep III, Hathor is represented as animating the infant king and his *ka*, or other self, with the *ankh*, the symbol of life. The goddess was also thought of as a cow and was sometimes depicted suckling the king. She personified the sky and is often represented as a cow receiving the setting sun, an office which caused her also to be regarded as a guardian of the dead, whom she transported to the next world. But Hathor had another side to her nature: she was identified with the destructive 'Eye of Re', and as the 'Lady of Punt' she was a divine lioness. She was closely associated with Horus: her name Hathor *(Het Hor)* means 'House of Horus'. Hathor's ambivalence of character is similar to that of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar.

The Divine Scribe

The Egyptians deified the earth as a male deity, Geb; but often he was represented as a goose. In the Heliopolitan story of the creation, Geb originally lay in close embrace with Nut, the sky goddess, until separated by Shu, the god of the atmosphere (see CREATION MYTHS). The Pyramid Texts indicate that Geb was once venerated as the oldest of the gods, and the pharaohs were regarded as his successors, sitting on the 'throne of Geb'. A very



Michael Holford/British Museum

The abundance of funerary texts inscribed and painted on papyri and on the walls of tombs and coffins show the Egyptian's concern with his well-being in the after-life. It was believed that the dead could be resurrected to eternal life through ritual assimilation to Osiris, the god of the dead, who had himself died and risen again. The Papyrus of Hunefer shows Osiris on the far left, swathed in white mummy wrappings and holding the crook and flail, emblems of supreme power. In the centre the mummy lies on its catafalque and on either side Hunefer, the royal scribe, offers worship to various divinities

different deity was Thoth, who was associated with the city of Hermopolis but acquired attributes that made him significant to all Egyptians. His appearance is one of the strangest among the many strange Egyptian deities, for on a human body he has the head of an ibis bird. Thoth was regarded as the god of wisdom and the divine scribe; he is generally represented holding the reed pen and colour palette of the Egyptian scribe. He assumed an important role in the judgement of the dead, where he recorded the verdict when the heart of the deceased was weighed. The Greeks identified Thoth with Hermes and, as Hermes Trismegistus ('Thrice-great Hermes'), he was the source of the mystic revelation incorporated into the so-called Hermetic literature of the Graeco-Roman period (see HERMETICA).

A god who deserves special mention, though he was not numbered among the greater gods of Egypt, is Bes. He was represented as a squat, dwarf-like figure with a large grinning face. He may justly be called 'the poor man's god' because of his great popularity, despite his having no cult centre. Bes was the patron of fun and music, and helped women in childbirth. In many ways he could be regarded as the god of good luck; numerous amulets shaped in his image have been found.

The Egyptians were most obviously polytheists; but there is also evidence of a tendency to henotheism, if not monotheism, among them. Most notable is the use of the expression 'the Great God' in their wisdom literature and certain inscriptions. The use of this expression, without further qualification, is significant; it shows that the Egyptians recognized one supreme deity who needed no distinguishing name. It seems certain that in the earlier period the title 'Great God' referred to Re, the sun god; later Osiris may sometimes have been so designated. Akhenaten's concept of the Aten certainly merits the description 'monotheistic'. But it seems likely that the worship of any specific Egyptian deity in its local sanctuary was a kind of henotheism; during the service, the deity concerned was conceived of as the 'one' god, there and at that moment.

Egyptian religion does not appear to have been so rich in mythology as was the religion of the contemporary civilization of Mesopotamia. It had indeed its creation myths and the fundamentally important Osirian myth. Three other myths are known which concerned Re and certain goddesses. One told how Re grew old and mankind rebelled against him. To punish them, Re sent forth his eye in the form of his daughter Hathor. So destructive was the goddess that the sun god had to make her drunk in order to stop her work of slaughter, for otherwise mankind would have been wholly exterminated. A variant version of this myth concerned the fierce goddess Tefnut, who lived as a lioness in the Nubian desert. Re, whose daughter she was, wanted her to return to him and he sent Shu and Thoth, in disguise, to persuade her to come back. On the return journey she transformed herself into a beautiful goddess at Philae, and revealed herself as Hathor at Dendera, which was her chief cult centre. The third myth told how the goddess Isis acquired her magical power. She made a serpent and caused it to bite Re. No god could cure Re in his agony; then Isis appeared and offered to relieve him on condition that he revealed his secret name to her. The tormented sun god was forced to comply and the knowledge she gained gave Isis her great power. There are a number of tales, such as that of the Two Brothers, which are full of supernatural details, but they are not true myths.

Ka, the Second Self

Religions are concerned not only with the deities who personify and explain the various manifestations of power that men encounter in the world, but also with human nature and destiny. The ancient Egyptians' concern with their personal destiny found expression in their elaborate mortuary cult. This cult presupposed a very complicated view of human nature. The individual person was conceived as a mixture of the physical and spiritual, made up of several constituents. The *ka* was a kind of *alter ego* or double, created at conception together with the person whose ka it was. Egyptian texts give conflicting information about the nature of the ka and where it existed during the lifetime of the individual concerned. In art it was depicted as an exact replica of the individual, from whom it was distinguished by the ka symbol – shown as two arms extended upwards – which was set on its head. Provision had to be made for the ka at death; in fact the tomb was called the *het ka*, the 'house of the ka', and it contained the ka statue in which the ka dwelt. 'To go to one's ka' was a euphemism for death. It is uncertain whether the Egyptians thought of the ka as a non-material entity; it seems to denote some vital force essential to the existence of the individual person.

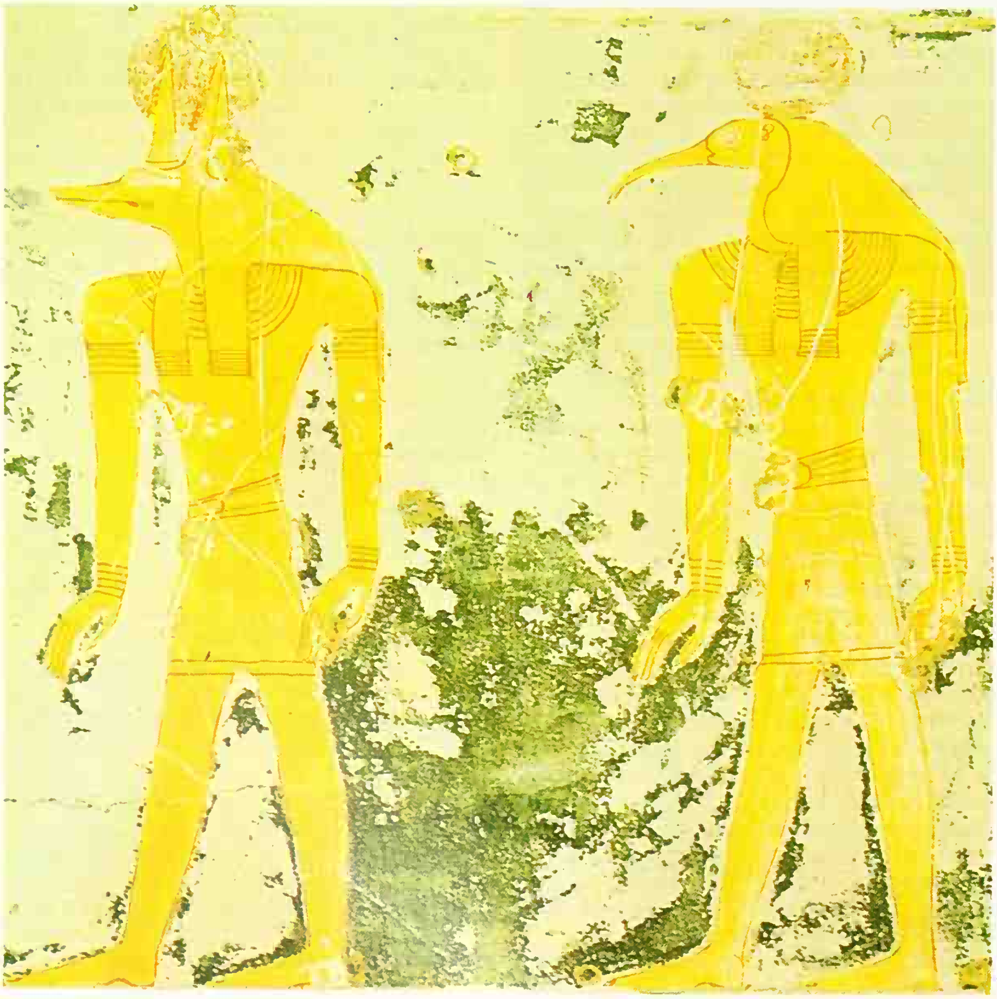
The ka cannot properly be described as the soul. The *ba*, another constituent of human nature, had more claim to this description, though not in the sense of the 'soul' as the inner essential self according to the Greek idea of the *psyche* or the Hindu *atman*. In their concept of the ba, the Egyptians expressed their belief that at death a free-moving entity separated itself from the body but remained in close proximity to it. They represented the ba as a human-headed bird, giving it a male or female face according to the sex of the deceased. In the funerary papyri the ba is often depicted as perched on the portal of the tomb or flying down the tomb shaft to revisit the embalmed body lying in the sepulchral chamber below. Another important constituent of the person was the *ib* or heart. This was sometimes referred to as the 'god in man', since it was regarded as a kind of witness or censor of the conduct of the individual within whom it resided. The heart had a vital role in the judgement after death. The individual's shadow and name were also important to his being, though of lesser significance compared with the other entities. At death, the Egyptian trusted that the proper performance of the mortuary ritual would transform him into an *akh* or glorified soul.

Important as all these constituents were

The Egyptians continued, century after century, to embalm their dead and to furnish their tombs as though the dead really did live in them

to the whole person, the body was always regarded as essential to life: this was why it was so carefully embalmed to preserve it from the disintegration caused by death. With their elaborate conception of human nature and the care given to ensuring eternal well-being after death, it is remarkable that the Egyptians never seem to have been curious about the purpose of human life in this world. In this lack of concern they contrast notably with the Mesopotamians, in whose mythology the origin and purpose of mankind was a primary topic.

Egyptian ideas of how and where the dead spent their afterlife are fundamentally confused. This confusion is already present in the Pyramid Texts (c 2400 BC). It doubtless went back to predynastic times and stemmed from different local traditions. Three conceptions of the afterlife can be distinguished. What is probably the most primitive envisaged the dead as living on in their tombs, equipped with various everyday necessities and nourished on daily food offerings made by their relatives. In the Pyramid Texts the existence of a celestial realm of the dead is described. The idea takes two forms: that of ascending to heaven to join the sun god Re in his solar boat on his daily journey across the sky; or of ascending to join the 'Imperishable Ones', the circumpolar stars. The idea of accompanying the sun god became the more generally accepted view. The third conception was associated with Osiris and his realm, which was called the *Duat* or *Ament* (the West).


Michael Holford

This realm was subterranean and was situated beneath the western horizon, which in Egypt was constituted by the western desert. The dead had to journey there, encountering many hideous monsters and fearsome obstacles on the way. This land of the dead was imagined as an idealized Egypt, where the blessed dead lived happily the same kind of life as in the Nile valley. Special guidebooks to the next world were provided for the dead: the Book of the Two Ways described alternative land and water routes, both equally perilous; the Book of Gates divided the Duat by 12 gates; the Book am Duat told of the 12 time-divisions taken by the sun god on his nightly journey through this underworld. What is particularly significant, in all this complex imagery and practice concerning the dead, is that the Egyptians continued, century after century, to embalm their dead and to furnish their tombs as though the dead really did live in them.

Magicians of the Nile

Magic played an important part in ancient Egyptian life and thought. It was mainly based upon the principle of symbolic imitation – that like will beget like. For instance a model of a wax crocodile, directed by an appropriate spell, might be transformed into a real crocodile to kill a rival; there is actual evidence of such a practice. Most things could be endowed with magical potency, from the pharaoh's crown to amulets such as the *udjat* eye (giving power to see everything, and promoting prosperity and fertility) and the *ankh*, a symbol of life and vitality, which was used by both the living and the dead. A statue of a god had to be animated by a magical ceremony similar to that of the 'Opening of the

Far left **Anubis, the jackal-headed god, conducted the souls of the dead to the other world and presided over funerals *Left* The ibis-headed god Thoth was the wise and benevolent scribe of the gods. He invented writing and all the other arts and sciences, and was closely associated with magic *Right* Akhenaten, who sought to promote the worship of the Aten, the sun's disc, above the worship of Amun, frequently had himself portrayed sitting in the sun's rays. These rays, ending in hands, bless the devout pharaoh**

Mouth' which was performed on an embalmed corpse. The whole mortuary ritual was based on the magical assimilation of the dead to Osiris, so that they would experience a similar resurrection from death. An indication of the Egyptians' belief in magic is provided by the custom of mutilating hieroglyphic signs representing dangerous animals or insects, or showing them as pierced with knives when they occurred in tomb inscriptions; it was a precaution against these potentially dangerous signs coming to life.

The service of the Egyptian gods was performed in temples by a professional priesthood, assisted by specially appointed laymen. This service had two main forms: a daily toilet and offering ceremony, and periodic festivals. The daily service was performed in the inner sanctuary of a temple by priests only, on the image of the god which was kept in a special shrine. The image was anointed and symbolically clothed and offerings of food and incense were made to it. The festivals commemorated various events in the annual calendar: New Year's Day, sowing and harvest, and the inundation of the Nile.

Some festivals were devoted to certain deities or their temples. A notable example was the annual visit of Hathor of Dendera (or rather her cult statue) to the sanctuary of her spouse Horus at Edfu. The journey was made by boat, with halts at various towns on the banks of the Nile. The occasion was one of prolonged rejoicing and merry-making among the people. It was only at festivals that ordinary folk saw the image of the god, which was carried out of the temple, mounted on a special boat, on the shoulders of priests; for inner courts of temples were forbidden to the public.

Egyptian temples were of three main types; some of them, like those of Amun at Thebes, were on a colossal scale. Sun temples, such as that of Atum-Re at Heliopolis and of the Aten at Akhetaten, were square in shape, enclosed by a wall and open to the sky. At Heliopolis the chief object of veneration was the *ben-ben* stone, a truncated obelisk which marked the place where Atum-Re had originally emerged from the primeval waters of Nun and commenced the work of creation. Other temples were of rectangular plan, comprising a series of courts. The inner

Michael Holford

Lord of Every Land

The great Hymn to the Aten *nobly expresses Akhenaten's concept of the sun as supreme lord*

Beautiful is your shining forth on the horizon,
O living Aten, beginning of life!
When you arise on the eastern horizon,
you fill every land with your beauty.
You are bright and great and gleaming,
and are high above every land.
Your rays envelop the lands,
as far as all you have created.
You are Ra, and you reach unto their end,
and subdue them all for your beloved son . . .

You who bring children into being in women,
and make fluid into mankind,
Who nourishes the son in the womb of his mother,
who soothes him so that he weeps not,
O nurse in the womb!
Who gives breath in order to keep alive
all that he has made;
When he comes forth from the womb on the day of
his birth,
you open his mouth in speech, and give all that
he needs . . .

You make the Nile in the Other World,
and bring it whither you wish,
In order to sustain the people,
even as you have made them.
For you are lord of them all,
who weary yourself on their behalf,
The lord of every land, who arises for them,
O Aten of the day, great of majesty!

Extract from Joseph Kaster's translation in *The Literature and Mythology of Ancient Egypt*

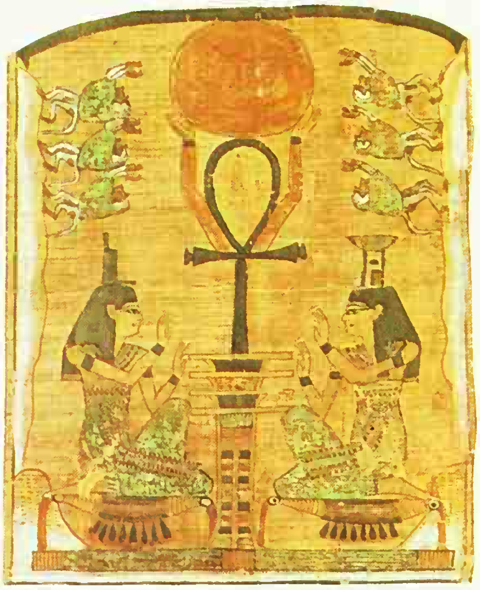
sanctuary was reached through a pillared hall, and was in complete darkness. The third type of temple was the funerary temple, built for the proper performance of those rites, especially the food offerings, which were regarded as essential to the well-being of the dead man whose tomb they served. The great pharaohs of the New Kingdom erected vast funerary temples on the western bank of the Nile, opposite Thebes. These differed little in size and layout from the temples of the gods.

Since most of the extant evidence on Egyptian religion relates to the king and the upper classes of society, little is known of the religion of ordinary folk. Lesser deities, such as Bes, doubtless seemed to them more approachable than the great state deities, but Osiris had an intimate personal appeal to all classes. There is some evidence that Amun could be addressed as 'one who cometh at the voice of the poor'; however, it is significant that on the stele of Neb-re, where these words occur, the Amun 'who hears the prayers' is depicted seated outside the portals of his temple, as a kind of vizier to the greater Amun who dwelt within the sanctuary.

The Dawn of Conscience

The 'dawn of conscience' has been located, with reason, in ancient Egypt. Already in the Old Kingdom the concept of *maat*, which denoted the qualities of truth and justice, was associated with the 'Great God' as the basic principle of an ordered universe. From this period, too, emerge the beginnings of the belief so important to the evolution of ethics and morality, that the dead would be judged on their conduct in this life.

The immense duration of Egyptian religion, and the impressive continuity of its traditional pattern of faith and practice, suggest that the Egyptians unthinkingly accepted an ancient priestly tradition, generation after generation. But there is evidence that this was not wholly so, and that there were those who could look critically at their ancestral faith, especially the funerary cult. There exist, inscribed on the walls of certain New Kingdom tombs, versions of what is known as the Song of the Harpist, which takes its name from the figure of a corpulent harpist who is depicted singing it. It was probably sung at memorial feasts held by relatives at the tombs of the deceased. In it the futility of the mortuary faith is frankly expressed: 'None cometh from thence that he may tell us how they (the dead) fare, that he may tell us what they need, that he may set our heart at rest, until we also go to the place whither they have gone.' The obvious conclusion is drawn from this scepticism: 'Be glad, that thou mayest cause thine heart to forget that men will (one day) beatify thee. Follow thy desire, so long as thou livest.'



Michael Holford

The Aten, the sun's disc, was elevated to the status of a god by the Pharaoh Amenhotep, who changed his name to Akhenaten, meaning 'pleasing to the Aten', and built a magnificent temple to his god

A Mummy at the Feast

The expression of such sentiments is significant; for it shows that there did exist at least a minority who could doubt the truth of their traditional religion and the effectiveness of its ritual technique for the achievement of a blessed immortality. Yet this faith was able to continue its serene tradition without the suppression of such heretical scepticism. That it did so attests the strength of two things: the spiritual satisfaction which the average Egyptian got from his faith in Osiris, and the practical nature of his philosophy of life. The Greek historian Herodotus, who visited Egypt in the 5th century BC, records an Egyptian custom at banquets of showing the guests a model of a mummy with the admonition: 'Gaze here, and drink and be merry; for when you die, such will you be.' This curious custom was prompted by no spirit of cynicism or levity; it reflected the practical evaluation of life that characterized the Egyptians. They feared death, but they believed that they had the means of reversing its threat of personal extinction and they accordingly made provision to secure this immunity. But such preoccupation with death and the afterlife did not induce pessimism or prompt a this-world-denying attitude. The Egyptians sought to extract the most joy possible from life, while preparing for death and mindful of the judgement that faced them thereafter.

The legacy of Egypt's ancient religion cannot be accurately assessed. The famous American Egyptologist J. H. Breasted believed that Akhenaten's monotheism influenced Moses and found its fruition in the Hebrew concept of one single God, who is the creator and sustainer of the universe. The connection cannot be proved and the assumption that it did exist has not been generally accepted by scholars. More certain is the influence of Egyptian wisdom literature on the Jewish Book of Proverbs. The elements of Egyptian religion which passed into Coptic Christianity were chiefly related to the world after death; such elements included the idea of a judgement immediately after death and of the assessment as being made by weighing the soul on scales. And the Egyptian elements have yet to be fully evaluated in the Hermetic literature, where the god Thoth figures prominently under the name of Hermes.

(See also BOOK OF THE DEAD; CREATION MYTHS; HORUS; ISIS; JUDGEMENT; MUMMIFICATION; OSIRIS; SETH.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (Peter Smith, 1959); R. Brier, *Ancient Egyptian Magic* (Morrow, 1981); J. Cerny, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Greenwood, 1979); M. Lurker, *Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, revised by Peter Clayton (Thames & Hudson, 1984); D. A. MacKenzie, *Egyptian Myth and Legend* (Longwood Press, 1976).

Eisteddfod

A Welsh word meaning a 'session'; the traditional assembly of Welsh bards and musicians, at which competitions were held and a 'chair' was awarded to the chief bard; the modern festival, now held annually, owes its popularity to a revival of interest in Celts and Druids in the 19th century; it consists of competitions in poetry, music, literature, and the arts and crafts, and is intended to preserve and promote the Welsh language and culture.

See DRUIDS.

El

The supreme deity of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, whose wife Asherah, called Astarte by the Greeks, was the great mother goddess: his name means literally 'the god' and his other titles, 'Father of Men', 'Creator of Created Things' and 'the Bull' indicate his benevolence to man and his strength and virility; he is depicted on a stele as a bearded man, wearing a crown adorned with a pair of bull's horns.

See ASTARTE.

ELDER

TWO SPECIES OF ELDER have magical and mythological associations: the common elder – 'ever bush and never tree', as an old Scots rhyme has it – and the dwarf elder, a large, ill-smelling herbaceous plant dying down in winter.

Of the two, common elder is more closely connected with magic; as with so many plants, it is associated with witches and the Devil. If elder is taken indoors, death will be in the house within a year; if it is burnt, the Devil will come down the chimney; if you strike a man dead with an elder stick his hand will come up from his grave; beat a child with elder and it will stop growing properly; make a boat of elder and you are sunk; a cradle, and the child will ail and be easy prey to fairies. Yet an old American belief says that burning an elder stick on Christmas Eve will reveal all witches and black magicians in the area.

Scandinavian mythology makes much of Hydle-moer, the elder mother, related to Hulda, the goddess of marriage. It was she rather than witches who was responsible for disasters following injury to an elder, but this was a matter of revenge, and could be averted by asking permission before cutting an elder or making use of it. A Danish legend suggests that if one stands under an elder at midnight on Midsummer Eve, the King of the Elves will be seen passing by.

Yet amulets and charms against witches and other evil spirits could be made from elder wood; elder sprigs picked on the last day of April and fixed on to houses protected their inhabitants; while, if a baptized person dabbed the green juice from the elder's inner bark on to his eyes, he could know of the doings of witches anywhere. Elder would protect, too, from lightning, could be made to charm warts away and made the ideal handle for the whips of hearse drivers who were at risk because of their work with the newly dead.

In Austria, as in northern England, a cross of elder was placed on new graves; if it flowered, this was a sure sign that the soul of the departed had reached heaven. Elder boughs might also be placed in a grave to keep witches from the dead.

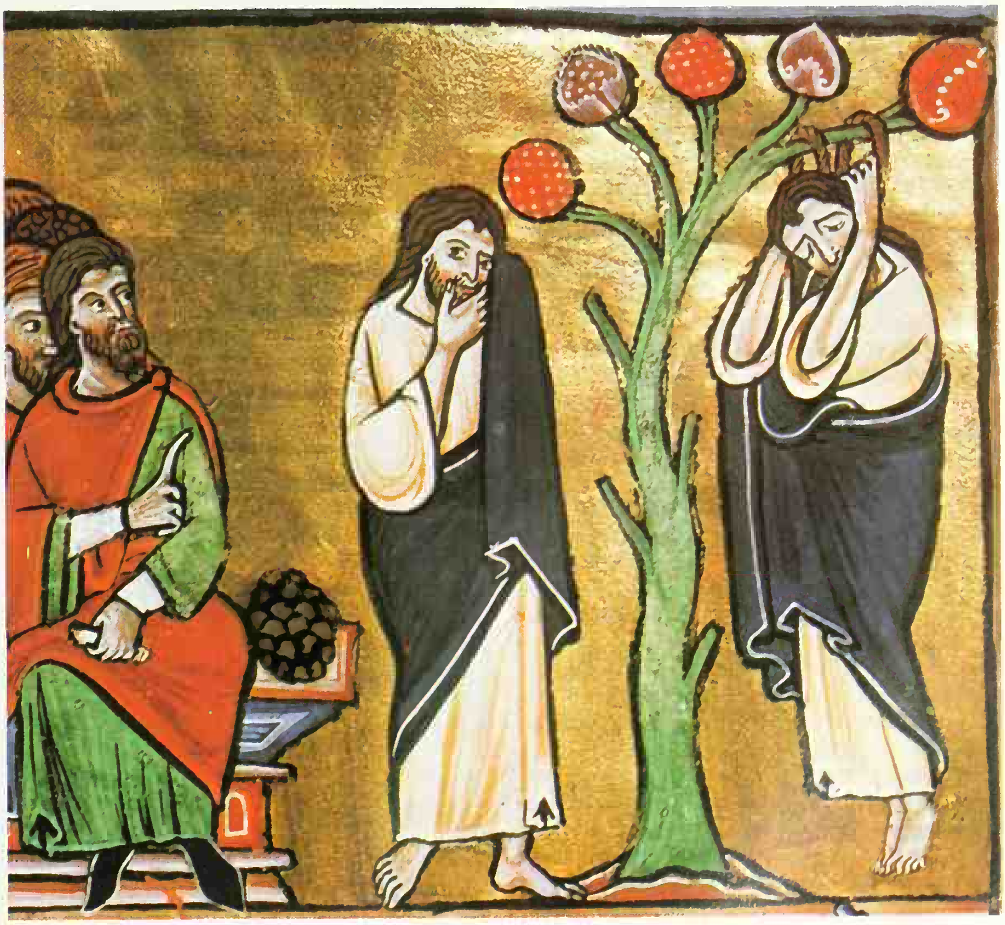
It is in Jacobus de Voragine's medieval *Golden Legend* that we find the earliest account of the elder's use for gallows and as an appropriate graveyard plant and, although the elder does not grow naturally in Palestine, the statement that it was both the tree on which Christ was crucified and that on which Judas hanged himself.

Elder has been used in medicine since Egyptian times. American Indians made tea from the bark, which was an emetic if the bark was scraped upwards, a laxative if scraped downwards. Pioneer folk medicine used the plant's bark, flowers, and berries to cure such ailments as headache, toothache, burns, swellings and tumours, rheumatism and insect infestation. Elderberry wine is still made today as a general tonic; and it is said if you carry an elderberry in your pocket you will be safe from ivy poisoning.

The dwarf elder was even more valuable than the tree in European folk medicine, being recommended against bites of mad dogs and snakes, to cure dropsy, gout and piles, and as a purge. It could also be used to dye hair black and cloth blue. While it was, in France, one of the herbs dedicated to St John, its main claim in mythology is its reputation of growing only where the blood of a Dane has been spilt.

The great botanist Linnaeus quoted the old Swedish name *mannablod* meaning 'man's blood', paralleled by the Welsh *llysan gwaed gwyr*, meaning 'man's blood plant', Norfolk 'blood hilder' and Old English *wael wyrt* or 'slaughter plant'. The sap and the juice of the berries, blackish like spilt blood, and the autumnal red of the stems, suggest reasons for this belief.

A.J.HUXLEY



Medieval legend identified the elder as the tree on which Judas Iscariot killed himself.

British Museum

The belief that God chooses an individual or a people for a particular task or destiny was held as long ago as the third millenium BC. The idea of divine election occurs not only in Hebrew thought but in many other religions

ELECTION

THE IDEA that God specially chooses certain individuals or nations for some peculiar role in the scheme of his providence is known as election; the word is derived from the Greek word *eloge* ('choice'). The idea is basic to the traditional structure of Christian theology, and it finds expression in the German term *Heilsgeschichte*, meaning 'Salvation-History'. This Heilsgeschichte is an elaborate interpretation of the history of the Hebrew people, designed to show that God used both the Hebrew people as a whole and certain individual Hebrews for the furtherance of his plan to save mankind. The idea that God had thus chosen the Hebrews was not, however, only a Christian idea; it was already deeply rooted in Hebrew thought and graphically presented in the Hebrew Bible. But in its original Hebrew form the idea was essentially nationalistic and almost exclusively concerned with the destiny of Israel.

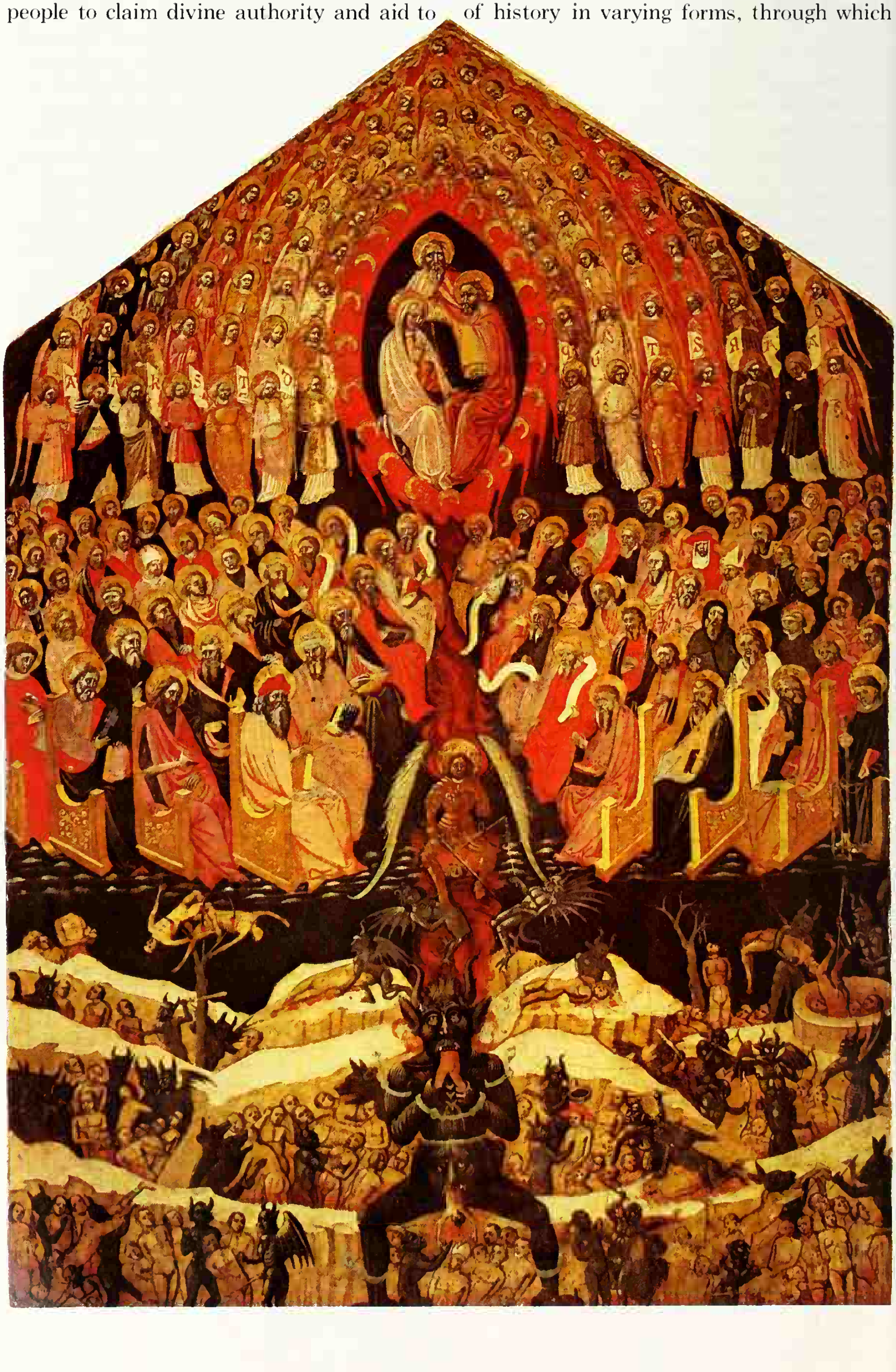
This idea of divine election, in both its Hebrew and Christian versions, has had an enormous influence on human thought and institutions in many parts of the world. In later Christian thought the idea took on a new and distinctive form in connection with belief in the predestination of human beings to either heaven or hell. Similar ideas of divine election have also found expression in other religions, most notably in Islam.

Belief that one has been divinely chosen for some special office or task is very ancient. In Egypt it can be traced back to the third millennium BC in the claim made by the pharaoh that he was the son of the sun god Re, and so represented him on earth. The imperialist pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty claimed that their god Amun-Re had given them world-sovereignty. In a hymn dating about 1470 BC, in which Amun is represented as addressing Thothmes III, the god announces his election of the king as the world conqueror: 'I have come that I may cause thee to tread down the uttermost ends of the lands; what the ocean encircleth is held in thy grasp. I have caused them to behold thy majesty as a lord of the wing, which seizeth on what he seeth according as he desireth.' Similar expressions of divine election are found in ancient Mesopotamian and Babylonian texts. Marduk, the great god of Babylon, is even represented as having chosen the Persian prince Cyrus (died 530 BC) to overthrow the native Babylonian king Nabonidus.

And it was not only kings who claimed such divine election; whole peoples have believed that they have been elected to a status of superiority over others. The Indo-Iranian peoples, who conquered Iran and North-Western India in the second millennium BC, referred to themselves as the *aryas* ('Aryans'), which meant the 'noble', in contradistinction to the despised natives, whom they dispossessed of their lands under the leadership of their own Aryan gods. The ancient Greeks arrogantly divided mankind into two contrasted groups: the 'Hellenes', who were their own superior selves, and the *barbaroi*, the barbarians. The Romans, in their turn, believed that they had been elected to world empire either by Jupiter, their supreme deity, or by a mysterious *fatum* or destiny. The British-Israelite theory of the British having been chosen for a similar role is a 20th century example of the same kind of belief.

Such a predisposition on the part of a people to claim divine authority and aid to justify their conquest and dispossession of other peoples can reasonably be evaluated as a natural human trait, indicative of a deeply rooted unwillingness to accept direct responsibility for their own violent self-aggrandizement. The sense of confidence produced by the conviction that one is serving God and not oneself is also obvious, and it represents an ancient form of 'psychological warfare', even though it was not often consciously used in this manner. But such instances of belief in divine election rarely developed into a carefully articulated tradition, which in turn decisively moulded the national character, as happened in Israel, where it also found literary expression of a most remarkable kind.

Hebrew literature, as embodied in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (a collection of literature of an apocalyptic nature), contains a philosophy of history in varying forms, through which



In Christian theology the idea of election became associated with predestination: the elect could look forward to an eternity in heaven, the rest to eternal damnation: a 14th century Italian painting of the Last Judgement

Scala

runs a common theme. It is that Yahweh, the god of Israel (see YAHWEH), had in the remote past chosen the Israelite or Jewish people for a special destiny. This destiny was to take the form of their settlement in the land of Canaan, where they were to devote themselves to his service and enjoy his special favour. This settlement in Canaan meant their conquest of the country and the extermination of its inhabitants, towards whom Yahweh is represented as being hostile, as he is also generally represented to be towards all other nations. The identification of Canaan as the land of Yahweh's promise provides the motif for the continuation of the theme of the Heilsgeschichte. The vicissitudes of fortune that Israel experienced, including periods of foreign domination, after the settlement, are explained in terms of Israel's varying faithfulness and unfaithfulness to Yahweh, with the promise of the ultimate vindication of the nation as Yahweh's Elect People.

The Promise to Abraham

The theme of Israel's election is impressively presented first in the books of Genesis and Exodus. It is set forth in these writings in what appears to be a sequential narrative of dramatic events, in which Yahweh is depicted as choosing Abraham, who originally lived in the Sumerian city of Ur in Mesopotamia, to be the progenitor of the Hebrew people and the first recipient of his promise that Canaan would become their own land. Abraham is represented as a kind of Bedouin chief, living a nomadic life with his family and their flocks after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. The first promise of his election is recorded in Genesis (12. 1–3), when Yahweh commands him to leave Haran, where he had settled with his father, and migrate to Canaan: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves.' After Abraham arrives in Canaan, Yahweh appears again to him and declares: 'To your descendants I will give this land' (Genesis 12.7). This promise is repeated to Abraham's son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob.

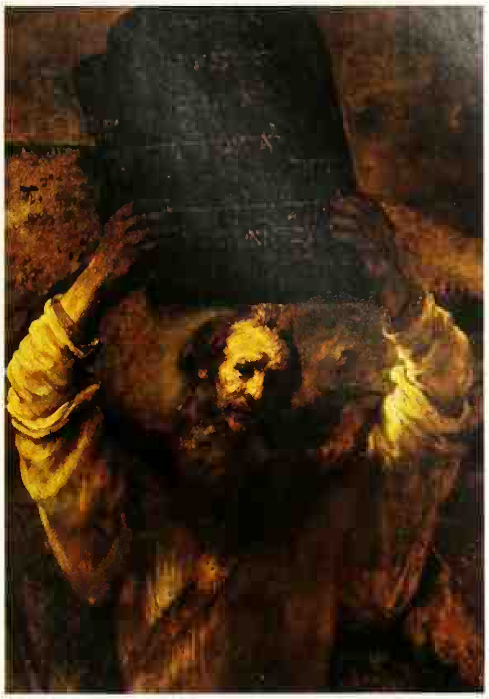
But although Abraham's election is regarded as the crucial event that initiated Israel's unique destiny, no reason is given why Yahweh did thus originally choose him to be the progenitor of the elect people who were to inhabit the Promised Land. Equally remarkable is the fact that, according to the Genesis narrative, it is not the elder son of Isaac, namely Esau, but the younger son Jacob who is selected by Yahweh to inherit the promise. This unexpected preference is referred in later Jewish tradition to the arbitrary choice of Yahweh; for Yahweh is represented as addressing Israel through the prophet Malachi: '"I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How hast thou loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau"' (Malachi 1. 2–3).

Despite Yahweh's promises Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do not, as it happens, settle in possession of Canaan but live as nomads, with Jacob himself dying in Egypt. According to Genesis (chapter 46), Jacob and his other sons settled in Egypt through the influence of Joseph, Jacob's son, who had become the chief minister of the pharaoh. This surprising conclusion of the book of Genesis, however, prepares the way for the marvellous events narrated in the succeeding book of Exodus. But this book starts with a very different situation. A long period has elapsed during which Joseph's generation have died out, and his descendants and those of his brothers have become a populous nation. The Egyptians, alarmed at the growth of these foreigners in their land, enslave them and take measures to reduce their numbers. Yahweh is then described as intervening to save the Israelites from their bondage. This he finally accomplishes, having selected Moses as his agent and leader of his people. According to the narrative, after the miraculous exodus from Egypt the Israelites journeyed to Mount Sinai, where Yahweh summoned Moses to bear to the people an invitation to enter into a covenant with him: 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel . . . if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel' (Exodus 19.3–6). Yahweh is then represented as delivering to Israel, through Moses, the sacred Law including the Ten Commandments, the observance of which was Israel's side of the covenant.

Double-Sided Election

This idea of a formal covenant made between a god and a nation is unique in the history of religions. Logically it implies a kind of double-sided election: that Yahweh selected Israel to be his people, and Israel selected Yahweh as its god. However, throughout Hebrew literature it is Yahweh's election of Israel which is exclusively stressed. Israel's side in the transaction is invariably cited by the prophets in condemnation of the nation's failure to keep its obligations to Yahweh. That Yahweh signally fulfilled his commitment in giving Israel possession of Canaan is a reiterated theme of Hebrew prophecy and poetry, and it is graphically described in the book of Joshua. This writing closes significantly with Moses' successor Joshua, under whom the conquest of Canaan is represented as having been accomplished, addressing the Israelite tribes in a farewell speech before his death. He speaks in the name of Yahweh: 'I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell therein; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards which you did not plant.'

And so Yahweh's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is fulfilled: the descendants of these patriarchs have become a nation and are settled in possession of the Promised Land of Canaan. Thus is the theme of Israel's election and its accomplishment presented in the Hexateuch, or first six books of the Old Testament. But scholars are generally agreed that this presentation is a later literary creation from earlier and diverse traditions, and that the reality behind it was very different. Research has distinguished a literary tradition, designated the 'Yahwist', which forms the basic scheme of the Hexateuch. It is so called because it is consistently concerned to show that Yahweh is the supreme creator god who chose Israel to be his people. On analysis, this Yahwist tradition appears to date from about 900 BC, and is a cleverly designed composition which has fused into a consequential narrative three different cycles of tradition. Its purpose was to present the various Hebrew tribes which had established themselves in Canaan as a unified people, descended from a common ancestor, to whom the god Yahweh had originally promised the possession of Canaan. The three cycles of tradition are usually described as the Primeval History, which starts with the creation and fall of Adam and ends with the Tower of Babel; the Patriarchal History, which runs from Yahweh's calling of Abraham to the settlement of Jacob and his sons in Egypt; and the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan.


Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

Above **Detail from a painting by Rembrandt showing Moses with the tablets of the Law; the Jews' acceptance of the Law of God at Sinai confirmed their special position as the chosen people** ***Right*** **Before the Battle of Uhud Mohammed is said to have provided his soldiers with water which flowed from his fingers. Claiming divine authority, the Moslems justified their conquest of other peoples and lands**

Philosophy of History

From the careful investigation of the relevant evidence, the modern view of the historical reality behind the Yahwist narrative is that a loose confederation of Semite tribes, who had adopted Yahweh as their war god, partially conquered Canaan: some of these tribes had probably escaped from bondage

Sonia Halliday

in Egypt. The devotees of Yahweh were concerned to maintain the exalted position of their god after the settlement in Canaan, but the tendency of the confederate tribes was to revert to the worship of their ancestral gods or adopt the agricultural deities of Canaan. The Yahwists were helped in their task by the fact that the break-up of the confederation made for military weakness and the consequent defeat of the Hebrew settlers by revived Canaanite power and the newly established Philistines. The Yahwist prophets were, accordingly, able to proclaim that when the tribes had been faithful to their covenant with Yahweh, he had done mighty deeds for them – delivered them from Egyptian bondage and given them possession of Canaan. They called upon them, therefore, to repent of their unfaithfulness, repudiate the other gods and return to their allegiance to Yahweh, who would remember his covenant and save them.

This Yahwist appeal to Yahweh's providence for the Israelite tribes in the past was, according to modern scholars, eventually elaborated by a Yahwist writer into the veritable philosophy of history which has been preserved in the Hexateuch. Its theme was Israel's election and Yahweh's providence for his chosen people; its aim was to show that Yahweh had been the ancestral god of the various tribes that had formed the Israelite confederation. To achieve this, the Yahwist writer fashioned the ancestral legends of the various tribes into a consecutive narrative which related various ancestors into generations of one family, whose founder was Abraham. In this Patriarchal History the election theme was carried back beyond the Exodus and Sinai covenant to an original promise made to Abraham. Hence, by fusing this Patriarchal History with the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan tradition, the various Semite tribes that had formed the Israelite confederation were presented as the descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. To complete the cycle of this conspectus of Yahweh's providence in the past, the Yahwist writer added to the Patriarchal History and the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan narratives the Primeval History – an account of mankind from the creation of its original parents, Adam and Eve, to the shattering of the original unity of mankind and its scattering abroad as divine punishment for the building of the Tower of Babel.

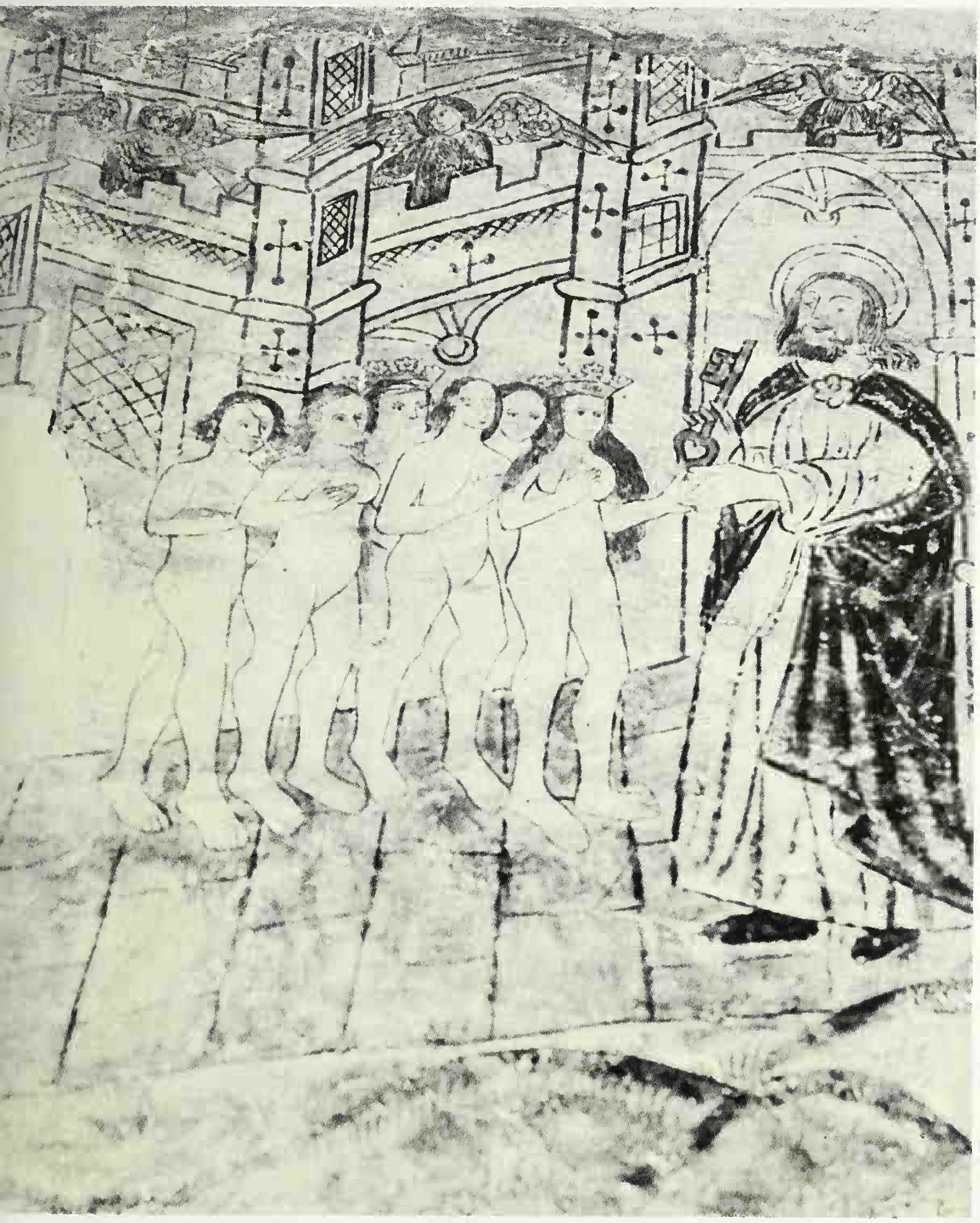
The Godly Remnant

This Yahwist interpretation of history came to exercise a profound influence upon all subsequent Jewish life and thought. For there was thus enshrined in their sacred Scriptures a graphic record of how Yahweh chose Abraham to be the progenitor of Israel, promising to his descendants the possession of Canaan, and of how he had marvellously fulfilled his promise. And the Torah or Sacred Law, given at Sinai, was the symbol of Israel's covenant with Yahweh to serve him as his Elect People. Through all their long centuries of suffering and tribulation, this sense of divine election has always inspired and sustained the Jewish people, and forged an indissoluble bond between them and the Holy Land of Yahweh's ancient promise.

From about the 8th century BC an important variant version of the Election belief grew up. During the religious and political struggles of this period the majority of the Israelite people often forsook Yahweh for the worship of other gods. This caused the Yahwist prophets to formulate the idea of a 'remnant' of the nation who would always remain faithful to Yahweh, and so inherit the promise of the Election (Amos 3.12; Isaiah 10.20–22). This idea was destined to be utilized in a remarkable manner many centuries later, and to become a formative factor in Christianity of fundamental importance. The transformation of the idea was the work of St Paul (see PAUL). Himself a Jew who accepted Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, Paul was confronted with the problem that the majority of his compatriots rejected Jesus and were thus cut off, as he saw it, from salvation. Hence he was faced with the question: 'has God rejected his people?' (Romans 11.1). For an answer, Paul fell back on the old prophetic idea of a Godly Remnant as the true Israel; and as this Remnant he identified the minority of the Jews who had become Christians and the Gentile converts, justifying the incorporation of the latter by quoting a prophecy of Hosea: 'Those who were not my people I will call "my people"' (Romans 9.25). Thus Paul provided the Christian Church with the means whereby it could claim that it was the true Israel, and the rightful heir of

C. M. Dixon

'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church . . . I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven , and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.' Peter was singled out from the rest of the apostles by Christ and given special authority *Above* On this Byzantine marble chest Peter is shown receiving from Christ the scroll which became one of his distinguishing symbols *Below* Keys in hand, the saint is shown, in this English church wall-painting, exercising his function as keeper of the gates of heaven, as he welcomes in the souls of the blessed



Peter Goodliffe

God's promises to the Hebrew patriarchs. This claim is uncompromisingly made in I Peter (2.9). 'But you (Christians) are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.'

But Christianity, in its turn, became faced with the problem of those who remained obdurate to its message or failed to live according to their baptismal profession. Consequently, the idea grew up that the number of God's Elect must be small; for 'many are callėd, but few are chosen' (Matthew 22.14). In Christian theology the idea of Election became closely associated with that of predestination. St Augustine (354–430 AD), probably from his own personal experience of conversion and his conviction that man can do nothing to save himself and is in need of God's previous grace, referred to 'those whom in his justice God has predestined to punishment' and to the salvation of 'those whom in his mercy he has predestinated to grace'. It is in the words of John Calvin (1509–64), however, that the doctrine of Election found its most notable expression in Christianity. The quintessence of his teaching is contained in the following passage from his writings:

> The seed of the word of God takes root and grows fruitful only in those whom the Lord, by his eternal election, has predestined to be his children and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. To all others who, by the same counsel of God before the constitution of the world, are reprobate, the clear and evident preaching of the truth can be nothing else but an odour of death in death.

This strict deterministic attitude provoked within Calvinism a reaction known as Arminianism (from its founder, Jacobus Arminius, 1560–1609), which maintained that God's sovereignty was compatible with a real freedom of will in man and that Jesus Christ died for all men and not only for the elect.

The idea of election, closely associated with predestination, figures prominently in Islam, the other great monotheistic faith. Thus in the Koran Mohammed declares: 'If Allah will guide anyone, He enlargeth his breast for Islam; but if He will send him astray, He maketh his breast narrow and contracted as if he were climbing into Heaven; thus doth Allah lay the abomination upon those who do not believe' (Surah 6. 125); 'If We (Allah) willed, We should cause to come to every soul its guidance; but true is the saying of Mine, "Assuredly I shall fill Gehenna, with jinn and man together"' (Surah 32.13).

(See also JUDAISM; YAHWEH.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

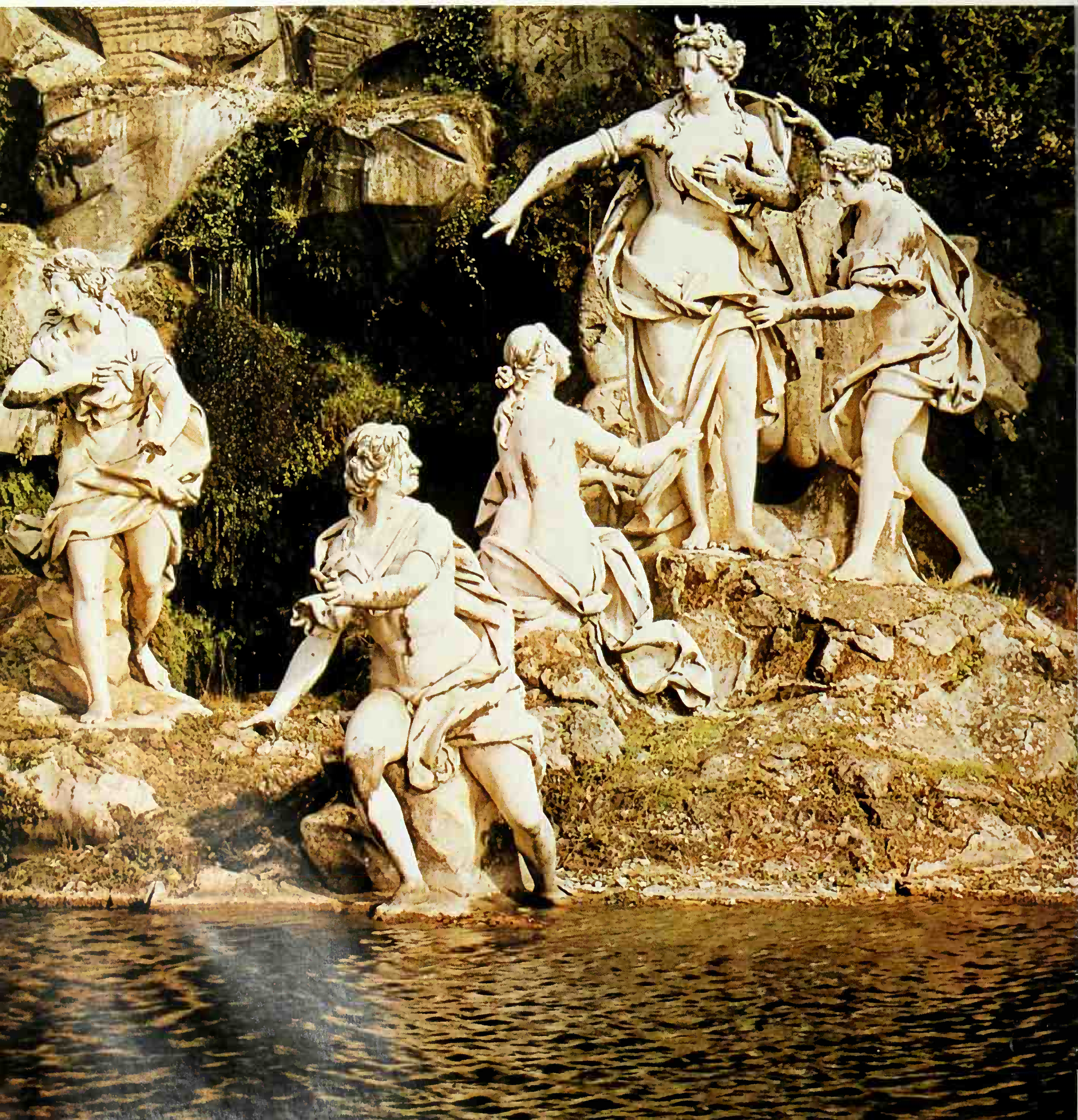
FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Man and his Destiny in the Great Religions* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1962); W. Hausmann, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election* (Philosophical Library, 1969); H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (Lutterworth, 1950).

ELEMENTS AND ELEMENTALS

THE THEORY THAT ALL things are made of differing combinations of four basic materials – fire, air, earth and water – was advanced by the Greek philosopher and scientist Empedocles, who lived in Sicily in the 5th century BC. The theory was taken up by Plato and Aristotle, and was accepted by the great majority of Europeans down into the 17th century. It has been reinterpreted by modern occultists to whom the four traditional elements stand for four conditions in which energy can exist: gas (air), electricity (fire), solid (earth) and liquid (water).

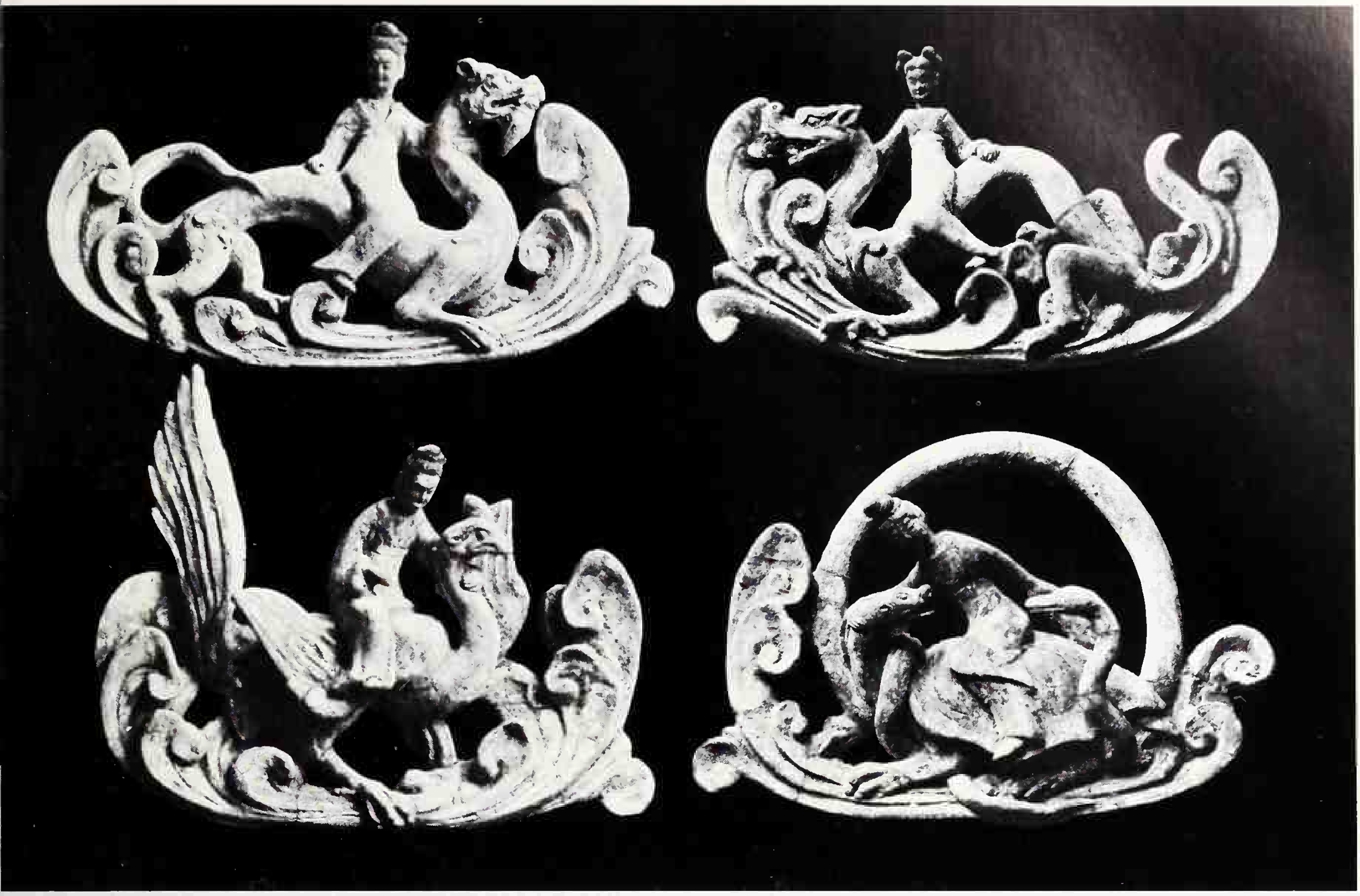
The four elements provided a basis for the belief of the alchemists that gold could be manufactured artificially (see ALCHEMY). They were also important in medicine, because they were combined with the doctrine of the four 'humours', stemming from the famous Greek physician Hippocrates and transmitted into medieval Europe by Galen, the great Roman medical authority of the 2nd century AD. The humours (from Latin *humor*, 'moisture') were the four liquids present in the body whose differing combinations determined each man's temperament and physique. The liquids and temperaments were connected with the elements as follows: fire, yellow bile, choleric (or bilious); air, blood, sanguine; earth, black bile, melancholic; water, phlegm, phlegmatic.

The perfect man, if such a thing existed, would have the four liquids and temperaments in perfect balance in his constitution. Disease was caused by an imbalance of the humours. Too much phlegm caused colds, an excess of yellow bile caused jaundice, and a strongly sanguine person would need



Water represents 'the unconscious depths of the human mind, unfathomable mystery, woman'. Diana was goddess of the moon, which rules the tides, and in art she is often associated with water, bathing in lakes or rivers: statues of Diana and her nymphs in the grotto of an Italian palace

Scala



Female figures ride animals that are associated with four of the five elements of Chinese philosophy in these decorations from a tomb of the Six Dynasties period (221–581 AD) *Top left* The Green Dragon, whose element was wood *Top right* The White Tiger, metal *Above left* The Red Bird, fire *Above right* The Dark Warrior, a tortoise and a snake, whose element was water. The fifth element is earth

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City

to be bled frequently. Cholera was named for its supposed origin in yellow bile and the choleric temperament. (See also DISEASE.)

The symbolic meanings of the elements naturally vary very considerably from one writer or artist to another. Fire and air were usually regarded as active, positive, creative and masculine elements, earth and water as passive, negative, receptive and feminine. This distinction comes out in the French writer Gaston Bachelard's summing up of the characteristic qualities of the elements: 'Earthly joy is riches and impediment; aquatic joy is softness and repose; fiery pleasure is desire and love; airy delight is liberty and movement.'

Briefly, the element of fire tends to be associated with energy, purification and transformation, passion and aspiration. Air is connected with breath, soul, speech, with flight as a liberation from the earth-bound state, and so with freedom, 'free as air'. Earth is associated with the solid and the practical, with the body, with gloom and melancholy because earthly life is so much inferior to the life of heaven, with the dead buried in the earth and with hell under the earth, and with riches and material success because it is in the earth that the harvest grows. Water is the fount and origin of everything, the primeval waters of the abyss before the world was formed, 'the deep' which existed 'in the beginning' in Genesis, the unconscious depths of the human mind, unfathomable mystery, woman. (See also BREATH; FIRE; FOUR; WATER.)

In the ancient world the whole of Nature was peopled with spirits, which lived in every tree and stream, every crag and cloud (see ANIMISM). Once the theory of the four elements had been accepted, four classes of spirits were particularly associated with them, the spirits which much later were called 'elementals'. Gnomes and undines are the elementals of earth and water respectively, sylphs and salamanders the elementals of air and fire: minor spirits of Nature, invisible to human beings but nevertheless substantial, and living in the four elements.

The association of the elements with spirits was probably first made by the Neoplatonists, followers of a school of philosophy which arose at Alexandria in the 3rd century AD. The Neoplatonists had a highly developed demonology and their demons (both good and bad) were thought to people the universe, and were the object of religious and magic rites. The Neoplatonists were deeply influenced by Plato, who developed the mystical and religious themes inherent in Empedocles's doctrine of the four elements, and it was an easy step for them to connect the demons with the elements.

The Greek authors do not go into much detail about the demons and spirits which perhaps in the 15th century first acquired the name elementals. For a really detailed account, one must turn to the works of the 16th century physician, alchemist, traveller and mystic Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, known to posterity by his adopted name of Paracelsus (see PARACELSUS). He invented the word 'gnome' and probably much of the lore about elementals as well, though he may also have drawn on legends and superstitions he encountered in his wanderings through many countries, including Sweden, Russia and possibly even India.

According to Paracelsus, man is made of three substances, spiritual or godly, soulful or astral, and visible or terrestrial. These three substances or elements which go to make up the constitution of man are universal, but whereas man exists in all three, there are other beings which live exclusively in only one of the elements. Various categories of beings are perfectly at home in different elements: gnomes can see and breathe as easily in the earth as undines and sylphs in water and air.

Man himself, it appears, would be an elemental spirit of Nature, but for the divine element in him. The elementals proper occupy a position between men and pure spirits. They have flesh, blood and bones, they propagate offspring, they eat and sleep, and in these respects, and in their physical organization, resemble human beings. But they can move as quickly as spirits.

The elementals are not immortal, being subject to disease. But they cannot be imprisoned, and fire and water do not injure them. They dress, talk and in many ways act like human beings but, says Paracelsus, 'are incapable of spiritual development.' They have reason and language like man – they have minds, but no souls in the spiritual or immortal sense. 'This may appear strange and incredible,' concedes Paracelsus, 'but the possibilities of Nature are not limited by man's knowledge of them, and the wisdom of God is unfathomable.'

He goes on to explain that the undines or nymphs live in water, the gnomes or pygmies in the earth, the sylphs or sylvestres in the air, and the salamanders or vulcans in fire. The four classes of elementals do not mix with each other. Each being keeps strictly to its own element, and to the undines, for example, water is what the air is to us. 'If we are surprised that they are in the water, they may also be surprised because we are in the air.' In their own element, the earth, gnomes can pass through rocks and stones as easily as we can pass through our own element, the air, and it is the same with salamanders in fire. The sylphs are most like human beings, because they would be drowned in water, suffocated in earth, and burned in fire. Each element is transparent for the spirits living in it: the sun shines through rocks for the gnomes.

The Love of an Undine

In size and appearance the undines resemble mankind. The gnomes are about a foot-and-a-half tall, but can expand at will to giant size. The sylphs and undines are kindly disposed towards man, the salamanders can neither be approached by nor approach man, while the gnomes are usually malevolent. On the whole, Paracelsus assures his readers, 'the elementals have an aversion against conceited and opinionated persons, such as dogmatists, inquisitive sceptics, drunkards, and gluttons, and against vulgar and quarrelsome people of all kinds'. What we know of Paracelsus's life suggests that this was a list of his own pet hates. 'But the elementals,' he goes on, 'love natural men, who are simple-minded and child-like, innocent and sincere, and the less vanity and hypocrisy there is in a man, the easier it will be for him to approach them.'

The elementals have their own manners, customs, languages and even governments. They have their own houses or palaces too – at least, the gnomes and undines do. These dwellings are made of special substances unknown to humanity, 'as different from the substances we know as the web of a spider is different from our linen'.

According to Paracelsus, undines have been known to adopt human shape, clothing and manner, and to enter into a union with man – a notion which inspired Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's charming romance *Undine*. Men have also been admitted to communities of elementals.

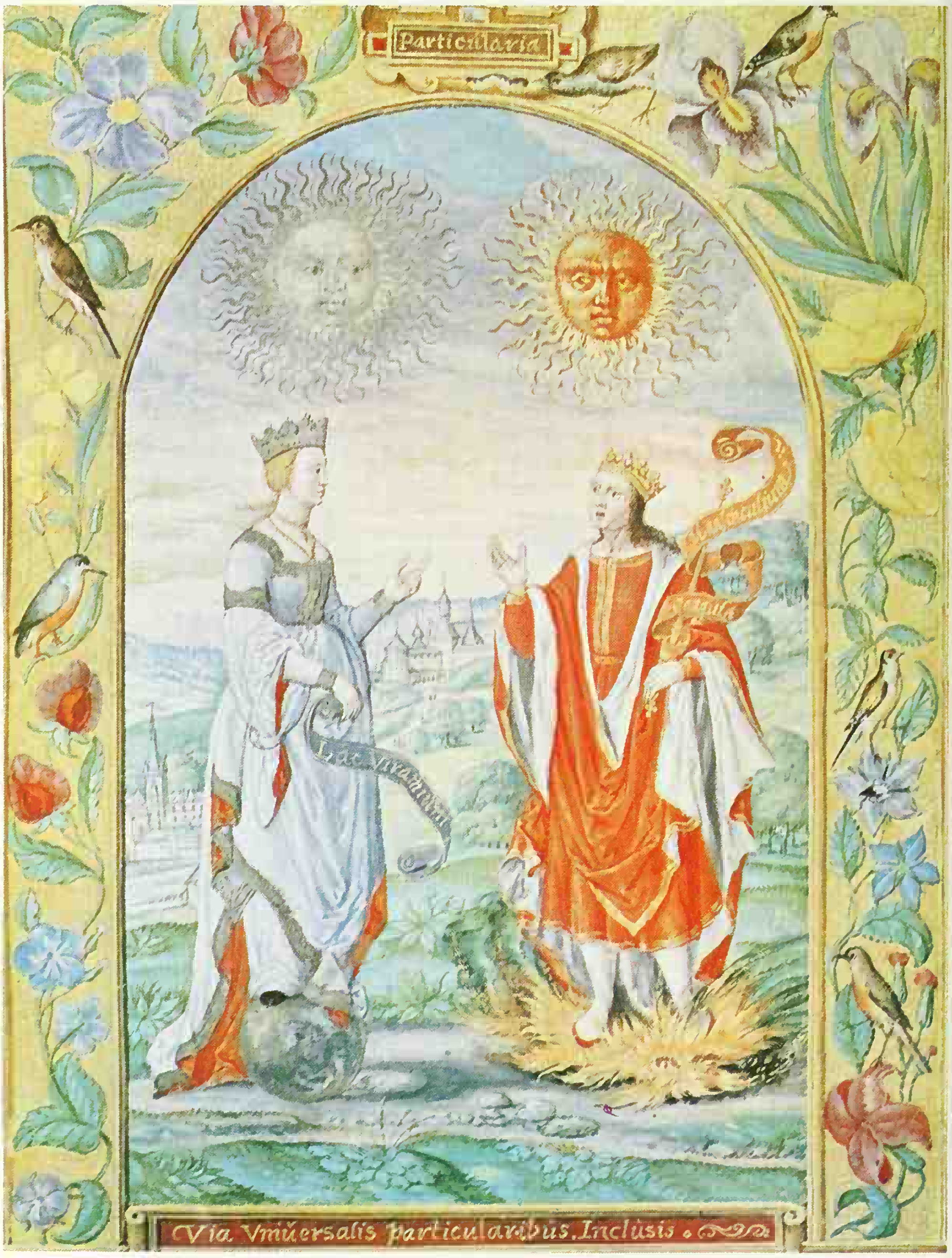
But the spirits of the earth, the air and fire seldom marry a human being, though they may become attached to him and enter his service. They are not, it must be remembered, 'airy nothings', or merely ghosts or appearances. They are of flesh and blood, only subtler than man.

In a special work on undines, Paracelsus supplies more details about them. If a man marries an undine, and she deserts him, he ought not to take another wife because the marriage has not been dissolved. If he does marry another woman, he will shortly die. The children of a marriage between a man and an undine will be human beings, because they will receive a human soul from the man. The undine, too, receives the germ of immortality through her union with a human being. But 'as an undine without her union with man dies like an animal, so man is like an animal if he severs his union with God.'

Finally, Paracelsus issues a warning. If any man has an undine for a wife, he must take care not to offend her while she is near water, as she might be prompted to return to her own element. In the same way, if anyone has a gnome for a servant, he must be faithful to him: 'if you do your duty to him, he will do his duty to you.'

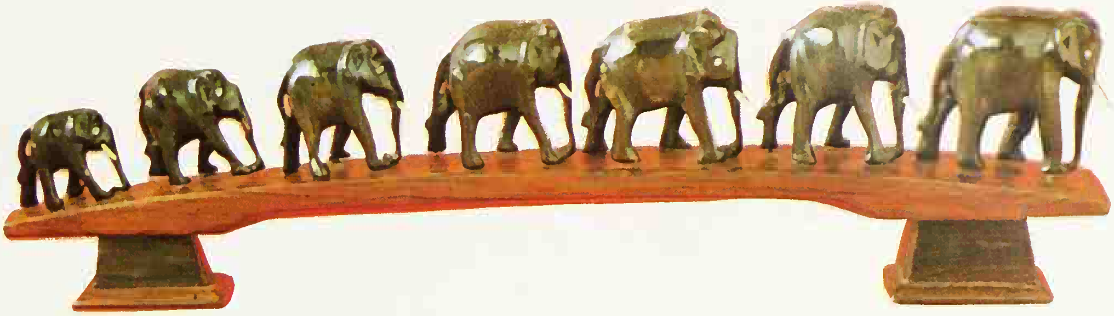
It would seem that the elementals owe much to the imagination and invention of Paracelsus, and if he drew on any popular fancies, he certainly added many touches of his own. The elementals have not entirely lost their grip on the imagination: the undines have inspired at least one modern theatrical work, and the gnomes of this world are still a force to be reckoned with. Modern occultists also, through concentrated imagination and will-power, try to conjure up 'artificial elementals' – cruel, injurious beings which may resemble toads or snakes, not visible to ordinary sight, but real enough to the person attacked or to a clairvoyant.

DAVID PHILLIPS

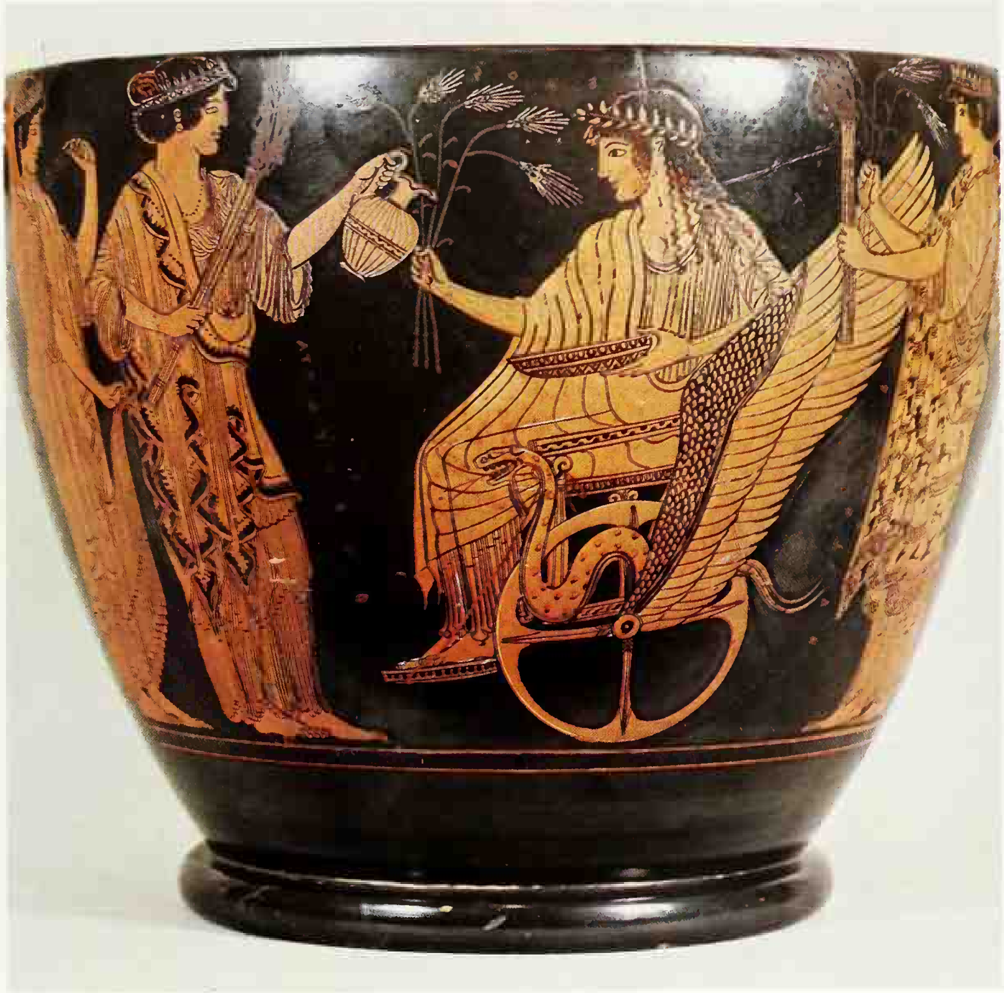


The four traditional elements fire, air, water and earth provided the basis for the alchemists' belief that gold could be manufactured artificially. Later alchemists said that everything was made of mercury, sulphur and salt: the male-female qualities of mercury are depicted in this illustration from the *Splendor Solis*, a 16th century treatise on alchemy

Elephant
Revered in the East for its strength and stability, it was also held to be a symbol of wisdom, moderation and pity, and was associated with kings and royal authority: in Hindu legend Indra, the king of the heavens, rides an elephant called Airavata, and the elephant-headed Ganesha, god of worldly wisdom, is often petitioned for success before any enterprise; the universe was also thought to be supported on the backs of elephants: in Siam, sacred white elephants were reared by human nurses.



Karin Hoddle



British Museum

What exactly happened at the celebration of the Mysteries at Eleusis, secret rituals associated with Demeter, is still a mystery. It has been suggested that at the climax initiates were shown the most holy object of all – one of totally unexpected simplicity

ELEUSIS

HELD IN HONOUR of Demeter and Persephone, the Eleusinian Mysteries were ceremonies of initiation, celebrated annually during antiquity at Eleusis in Attica. Their nature was a closely guarded secret, any breach of which was liable to punishment by death. Originally they were a purely local cult, possibly restricted to a single family or clan; their secrecy has been sometimes explained as due to these original restrictions, but it is more probably due to the sense of awe and fear which was felt by those who took part in ceremonies which concerned the forces of life and death.

Like all other rituals of Demeter and Persephone, the Mysteries were in origin agricultural ceremonies, but comparison with similar rituals in other societies shows that the processes of agriculture tend to be associated in ceremonies of initiation with those which govern the life of men. It is therefore probable that already in their earliest stages a personal significance was attached to the Mysteries. Unlike other types of initiation, they were not restricted by age or sex, and their significance was thus potentially universal.

The incorporation of Eleusis into a unified Attica probably led to an expansion of membership. Legend dates this to the mythological period, but adds that Eleusis was allowed to keep control of the Mysteries, according to the Greek writer Pausanias (2nd century AD). Apparently Athens did not interfere much, if at all, with the cult in the early historical period. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, which dates from the late 7th or early 6th century BC, does not refer to Athens or to Athenian elements of the cult. The management of the Mysteries appears to have been in the hands of the Eleusinian family of the Eumolpidae, from whom the Hierophant was drawn. His title indicates that he revealed the sacred objects, and he was the chief priest at Eleusis. At some stage, however, this management was shared with the family of the Kerykes, who had Athenian connections. They provided the *daduchus* (torch-bearer) and the *keryx* (herald) who were the other chief officials of the cult. Athenian influence first becomes apparent in the 6th century, with the building of an enlarged *telesterion* (hall of initiation), and towards the end of the century there is evidence of the construction of a sanctuary of the Eleusinian deities at Athens. A procession from Athens to Eleusis was instituted and initiation into the rites of Demeter and Persephone at Agrae, on the outskirts of Athens, was made a necessary preliminary to initiation at Eleusis. This first stage was called the Lesser, the second the Greater Mysteries.

A further development was the opening of the Mysteries to all who could speak Greek, provided that they were free of pollution. The first definite evidence comes from an anecdote in Herodotus, the Greek writer of the 5th century BC, which is set at the time of the battle of Salamis in 480. This tells how a great cloud of dust like that of the procession to Eleusis was seen moving towards Salamis and a sound like the cry made during the procession was heard. The story was taken as a sign that the Eleusinian deities had come to the aid of Greece in her struggle against Persia.

This legend must have contributed to the popularity of the Mysteries, and Athenian propaganda during the 5th and 4th centuries BC also greatly increased their prestige. This remained undiminished down to the Roman period, and they survived in fact until the end of the pagan world, when the invader Alaric in 395 AD finally destroyed the sanctuary.

Dancing by Torch Light

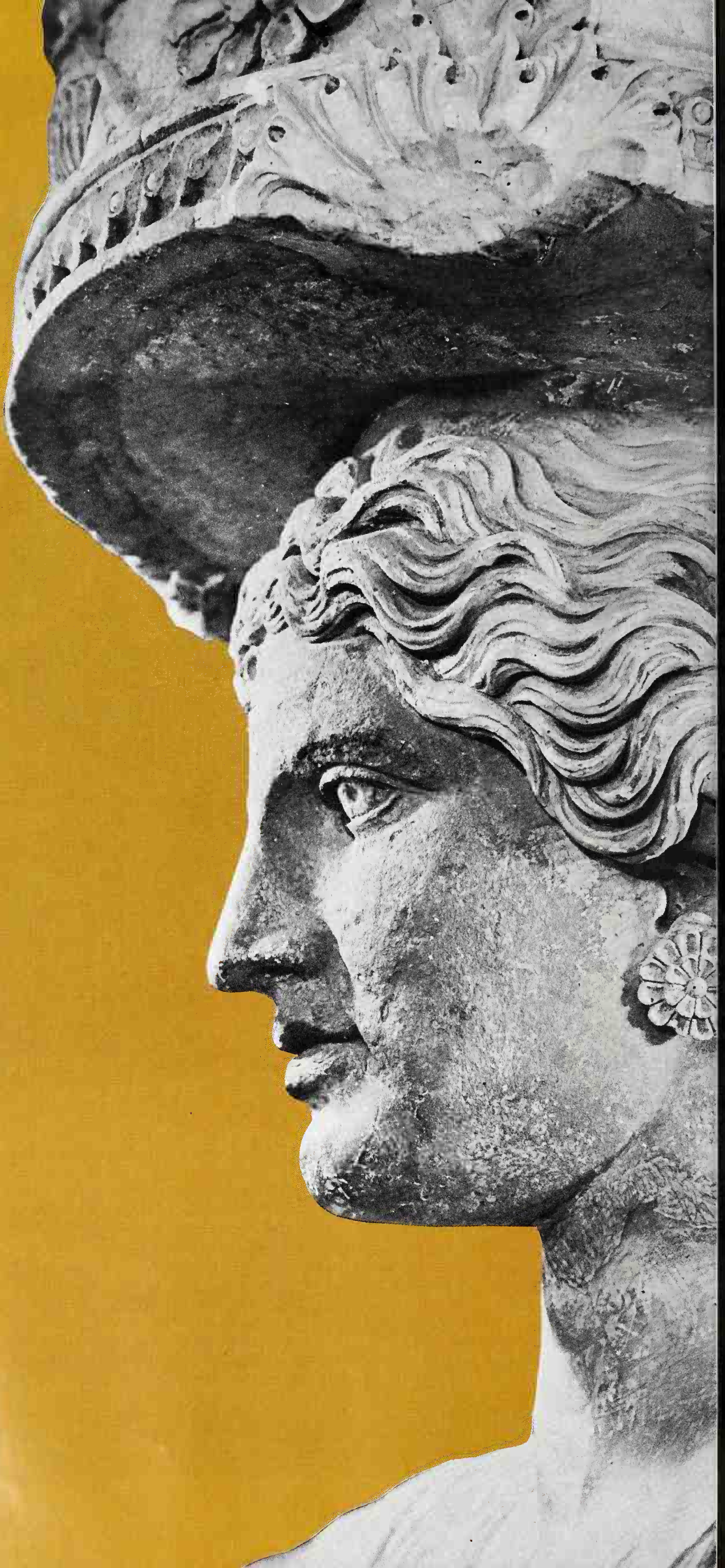
Archeology shows evidence of a series of buildings on the site of the telesterion from prehistoric times onwards, but the first literary evidence for the cult is found in the Homeric Hymn. This throws light on some of the preliminary rituals. One of these was a purification ceremony, in which the initiate was seated on a stool with his head veiled and his foot resting on a ram's fleece, while a priest or priestess purified him. In the Hymn Demeter is portrayed performing a similar ritual on her arrival at the palace of the ruler of Eleusis. On later monuments Heracles is shown undergoing the same purification.

Fasting was also a preliminary to initiation, and the Hymn describes how Demeter fasted for nine days when looking for Persephone and how she would not accept food or wine in the palace at Eleusis. She also carried torches in her search, and these played an important part in the ritual. There were dances by torchlight around the well Callichoron ('of the fair dances') at Eleusis, and this well is mentioned in the Hymn. It is still visible at the entrance to the sanctuary. The dancing formed part of a *pannychis* (all-night festival).

Demeter's fasting is broken when she is made to laugh by the jokes of a servant called Iambe. She then asks for a drink of barley and water, flavoured with the herb pennyroyal. In the cult fasting was also broken with this simple drink, and the making of coarse or obscene jokes (called *aischrologia*), which is common to many rituals of fertility, took place during the preliminaries to the Mysteries.

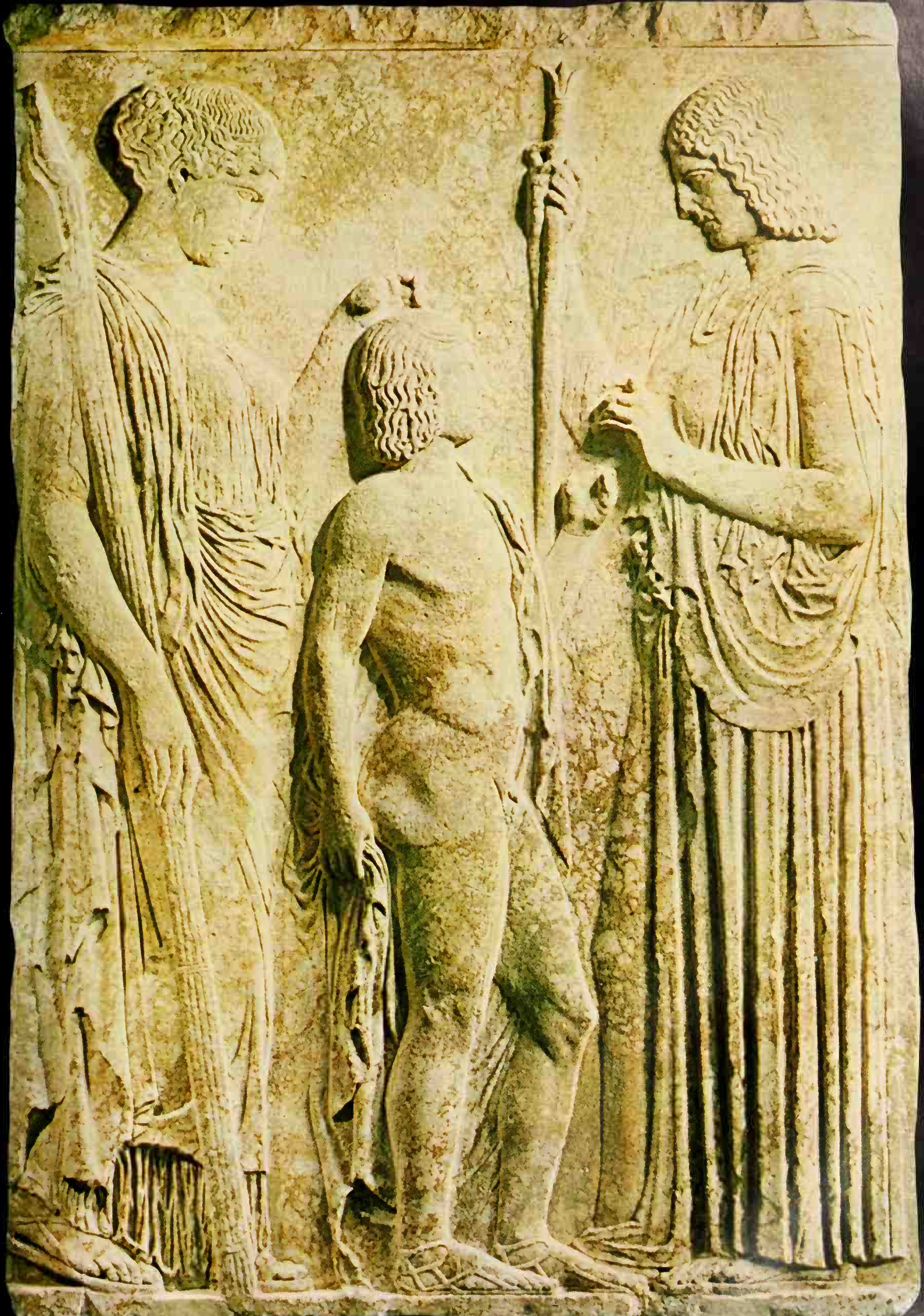
The Hymn goes on to describe Demeter's attempt to immortalize the king's son Demophon by placing him in the fire every night, her detection by the child's mother and the consequent failure of this project. There might be a reference here to the preliminary purification, in which fire was probably used. It has however been suggested that the story has a deeper significance, and that Demeter's nursing of the child reflects the 'adoption' of each initiate by the goddess in the Mysteries. As Demophon is reborn through his baptism of fire, so the initiate experiences a rebirth and the promise of a new life.

After the takeover of the Mysteries by Athens the preliminary ceremonies increased in complexity. The first stages



Facing page **After staying at the palace of the King of Eleusis during her search for Persephone, Demeter ordered that a temple should be erected where initiates would celebrate her Mysteries; she also taught Triptolemus, the King's son, the art of agriculture and commanded him to travel through the world in a winged chariot spreading this knowledge: scene on a Greek vase, showing Demeter with Triptolemus *Right* Head of a caryatid in Demeter's temple**

Mansell Collection



Previous page **Demeter presented Triptolemus, the hero of agriculture, with the first corn, and it has been proposed that the 'supreme revelation' of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were originally agricultural ceremonies, may have been the showing of a single ear of corn: relief at Eleusis showing Triptolemus receiving the corn from Demeter; Persephone stands behind him**

were purificatory. These were followed by the Lesser Mysteries, which took place in the month of *anthesterion* (February–March). Their purpose was also mainly that of purification, and they included washing in the river Ilissus. We are told that they had some kind of instructive content and prepared the initiates for the Greater Mysteries.

These took place in the month of *boedromion* (September–October), from the 15th to the 23rd day. There were two grades of initiation, and a year had to elapse before one was admitted to the final grade, which was known as the *epopteia*, meaning 'spectacle' or 'vision'. Before the festival the *hiera*, sacred objects, were brought to Athens from Eleusis. Their nature is unknown, but it was presumably these which the Hierophant or chief priest revealed during the ceremonies. They were kept in sacred boxes which are often represented in art.

The festival began with a solemn assembly at Athens during which the proclamation was made, which stated those classes of people who were forbidden to take part in the initiation. This was followed on the 16th day by a journey to the sea, where the initiates again took a sacred bath. Each took with him a pig, which was sacred to Demeter, and washed this also in the sea, after which the pigs were probably sacrificed. An official sacrifice to Demeter and Persephone took place the next day, and on the 18th day the initiates rested.

The great procession to Eleusis took place either on the 19th or 20th. This was called the Iacchus procession, after the deity who personified the cry which was made during it. The journey was a long one, some 14 miles, and it was interrupted by many ceremonies and included dancing, singing of hymns, and sacrifices. There was also a form of obscene humour in which prominent citizens were abused. On arrival there was a night festival with further dancing. This is portrayed on a votive tablet found at Eleusis.

About the main ceremonies of the Mysteries, which took place on the following days inside the telesterion, much less is known. The various stages of the building itself have been excavated, and the one which dates from the time of Pericles, in the second half of the 5th century BC, was a vast structure of approximately 51 metres in length and width. Along the sides were tiers of steps, wide enough to accommodate an audience of almost 4000 spectators. It is now thought that a small room stood in the centre of the hall, forming a Holy-of-Holies; from which the Hierophant would appear when he displayed the sacred objects.

The ritual took three forms, the 'things spoken' *legomena*, 'things performed', *dromena*, and 'things revealed' *deiknymena*. The first of these are thought to have been brief sentences, rather than a long exposition, and we are told by Aristotle that the initiates did not go to Eleusis to learn, but to have an experience and to be put in a receptive state of mind. Other authors emphasize the emotional experience of initiates to the Mysteries, whose reactions are said to be religious awe and fear, and at the close of the ceremonies joy, encouragement, and hope. The story of Demeter's 'passion', her search for Persephone and joy at her return, was central to the Mysteries, but it is not known how this was represented or referred to. Any form of dramatic representation appears to be ruled out by the nature of the telesterion. There were however important dramatic effects from the interchange of darkness and light, and the sudden blaze of torches at the climax of the Mysteries is often mentioned.

A Single Ear of Corn

Most of the evidence for what happened inside the telesterion comes from Christian writers, and is suspect on the grounds of prejudice and also of confusion with other pagan cults. Several authors refer to a 'sacred marriage' between Zeus and Demeter in relation to the Mysteries, and the Christian writer Asterius accuses Eleusis of celebrating 'a union between the Hierophant and the priestess' in an underground chamber. The Eleusinian myths do not refer to a marriage of Zeus and Demeter, but to that of Hades and Persephone. Originally the divine couple appear to have been anonymous, and they are sometimes referred to simply as 'the God and the Goddess'. If however a ritual union was enacted at Eleusis it cannot have taken place in the telesterion, where there was no underground chamber. Another Christian writer, Hippolytus, implies some form of sacred marriage, and he adds that during the Mysteries the Hierophant announced the birth of a sacred child to the goddess.

A second valuable testimony is given by Hippolytus about the epopteia, the name of which indicates that its essential nature was some form of revelation; references to the Mysteries throughout antiquity stress the fact that it was the *vision* of them that gave the initiates their hopes for the future. According to this writer, the 'supreme revelation' of the epopteia was simply the showing of a single ear of corn. This may seem hard to believe, and Hippolytus is eager to suggest the primitive nature of such a revelation. But if the agricultural basis of Demeter's worship is remembered, and the analogy that was felt between the life of the corn and that of men, one may be less inclined to question this testimony. The Mysteries were celebrated near the season of the autumn sowing, and their foundation is linked to the myth of the rape and return of Persephone, who personified the corn which was sown in the earth and 'came to life' again in the spring. In the symbol of the ear of corn the initiates may likewise have seen the promise of a new life beyond the grave, and the announcement of the birth of a divine child may also have symbolized this promise. At the same time, the child of the goddess of the earth is sometimes named as Plutus, the god of wealth, who in the Homeric Hymn is sent by Demeter and Persephone 'to the house of the man whom they love', and the divine birth and revelation of the corn must also have represented for the initiates the hope of prosperity in their present life.

We do not know much about the closing stages of the festival, but many authors speak of the encouragement and expectation of a better life which visitors to the Mysteries carried away with them. How far this involved moral resolutions it is hard to determine, although it seems that there was a kind of rudimentary ethical code at Eleusis which encouraged respect for family, fellow-citizens and foreigners alike. But the influence and prestige of the Mysteries throughout antiquity is rather to be explained as a result of the optimistic view of life and death which they offered, in contrast to the more pessimistic attitude of traditional Greek religion. Their influence on philosophy was strong, and through Pythagorean and Platonic circles they came to have an important effect on the philosophical and religious thought of the first centuries AD and also to some extent on the development of early Christian theology.
(See also DEMETER.)

N. J. RICHARDSON

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Supreme Revelation

The Phrygians also say, however, that he is a 'green ear of corn reaped'; and following the Phrygians, the Athenians when initiating (anyone) into the Eleusinian (Mysteries) also show to those who have been made epopts the mighty and wonderful and most perfect mystery for an epopt there – a green ear of corn reaped in silence. And this ear of corn is also for the Athenians the great and perfect spark of light from the Unportrayable One; just as the hierophant himself, not indeed castrated like Attis, but rendered a eunuch by hemlock, and cut off from all fleshy generation, celebrating by night at Eleusis the great and ineffable mysteries beside a huge fire, cries aloud and makes proclamation, saying: 'August Brimo has brought forth a holy son, Bromios,' that is, the strong has given birth to the strong. For august is, he says, the generation which is spiritual or heavenly or sublime, and strong is that which is thus generated.

Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*
(trans. F. Legge)

Peter Clayton

Alchemists were not only concerned with turning base metals into gold but with curing the ills of the flesh: disease and old age. They believed that the two aims were inter-connected and experimented diligently in their laboratories to produce a universal remedy or Elixir of Life

ELIXIR OF LIFE

THE WORD 'ELIXIR' comes from the Arabian *aliksir*, and in early Greek chemical treatises meant the transmuting agent by which base metals could be turned into gold and silver (see ALCHEMY). European alchemists referred to the Philosophers' Stone, which was believed to have universal curative powers, as the Elixir of Life, although many ancient writers claimed that the Elixir could also be made from other stone and is not necessarily identical with the Philosophers' Stone. An entry in an 18th century reference work, the *Universal Lexicon* of H. Zedler, defines 'elixir' as a kind of dark-coloured medicine, composed of many ingredients and dissolved in a strong solvent.

The belief in a panacea or remedy for all lls may be traced back until the days when the long life or immortality of the gods was explained by their partaking of mysterious food and drink, like the nectar and ambrosia of the Greek deities. It was widely believed that these precious and youth-giving remedies could be made of precious ingredients like gold, pearls and other jewels.

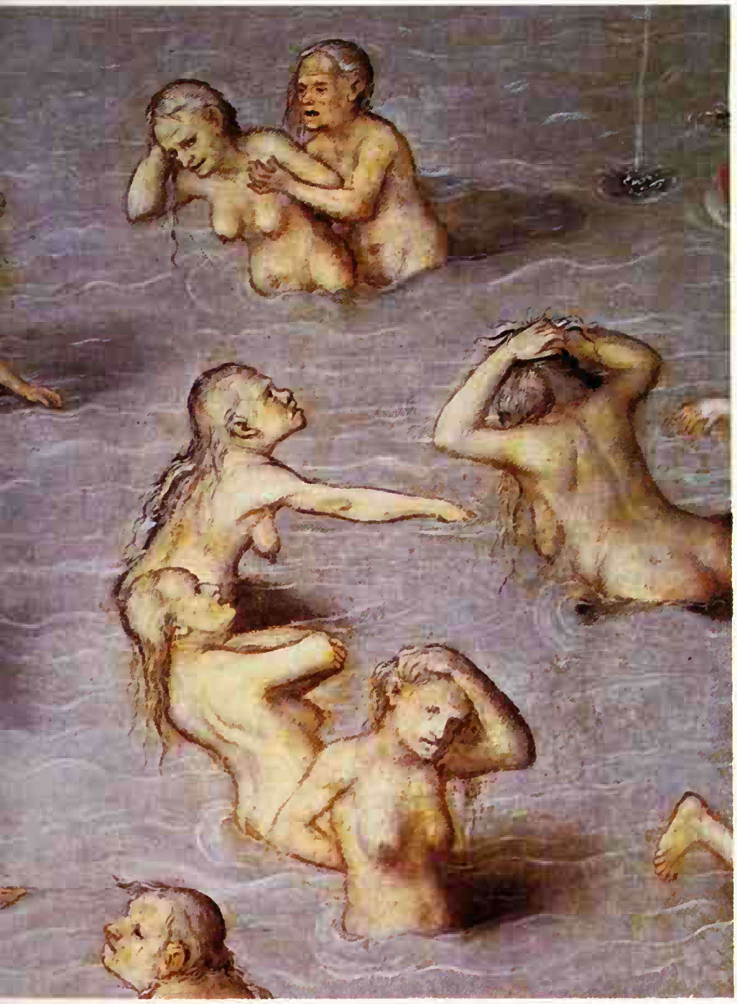
During the first centuries AD Alexandria was the home of the secret doctrine which promised to convert impure metals into gold, and at the same time to convert human beings into pure sages; and as the crowning achievement of their alchemical efforts, to prepare the 'universal remedy'. The theory was that if the philosopher or alchemist had attained a state of mind, allowing him to master the problems of metallic transformation, he should also be able to use his knowledge in overcoming all vicissitudes of human life, normally subject to an unknown number of diseases.

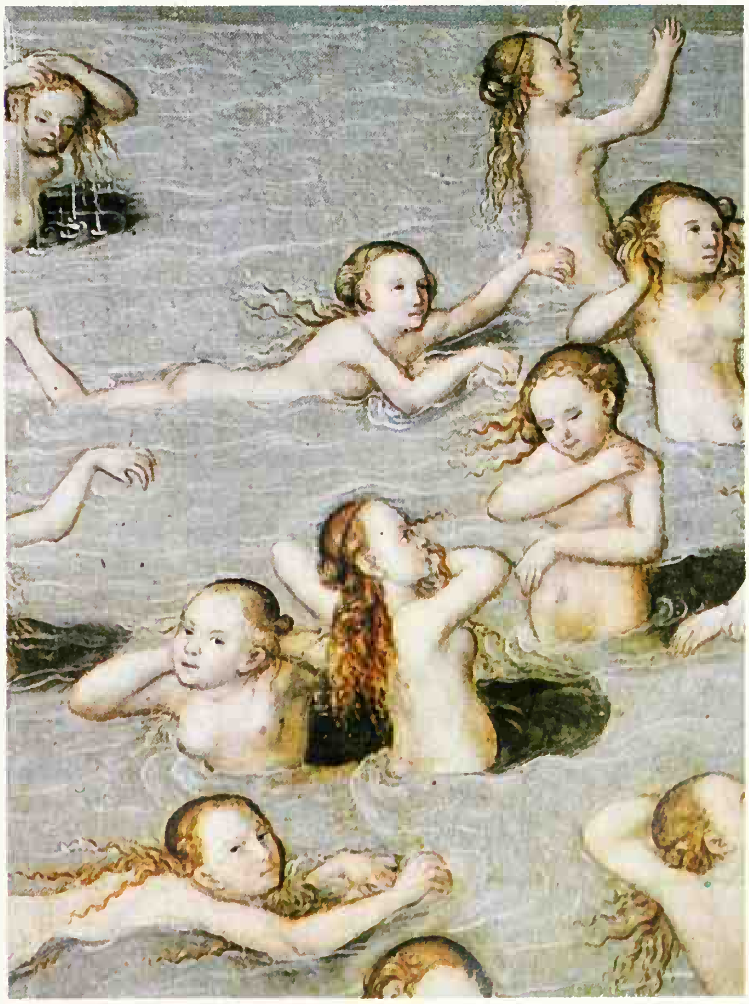
Here the aims of the Western and of the Chinese alchemists united. In the Far East the longing for a universal remedy was very strong; there are legends of a great master of the secret art of the 2nd century AD, named Wei Po-Yang who, according to tradition, became immortal together with one of his disciples and also with his little dog, who accidentally ate the rest of the magical panacea. In Europe the search for gold was pursued more single-mindedly and therefore its 'synthetizing' is mentioned more frequently than the other goal of the alchemist, the Elixir.

Normally medicines are designed to cure specific diseases; but what the alchemists strove for was the panacea, which could cure all kinds of sickness and also considerably prolong human life (hence *elixir vitae*, Elixir of Life). The basis for such an aim is the theory that all kinds of disease have a common cause – as for instance a disturbed balance of the 'elements' and 'humours' – so if it were possible to find an agent able to redress this balance, then the universal remedy would be found. Even the scholarly Paracelsus, who always revolted against the ancient humoral theories, claimed to have found a kind of panacea and told of the great number of different diseases he had been able to cure by its use. As late as the 16th century, the German alchemist Gerhard Dorn wrote: 'For since there is one single and most general beginning of all corruptions – and one universal fount of regenerating, restoring, and life-giving virtues – who, save a man bereft of his senses, will call such a medicine in doubt?' It is quite clear that the theoretical basis was the idea that sickness and disease have their common root in 'corruption', comparable to the Church's dogma that it was the original sin of Adam and Eve which was the true reason for all kinds of earthly degeneration.

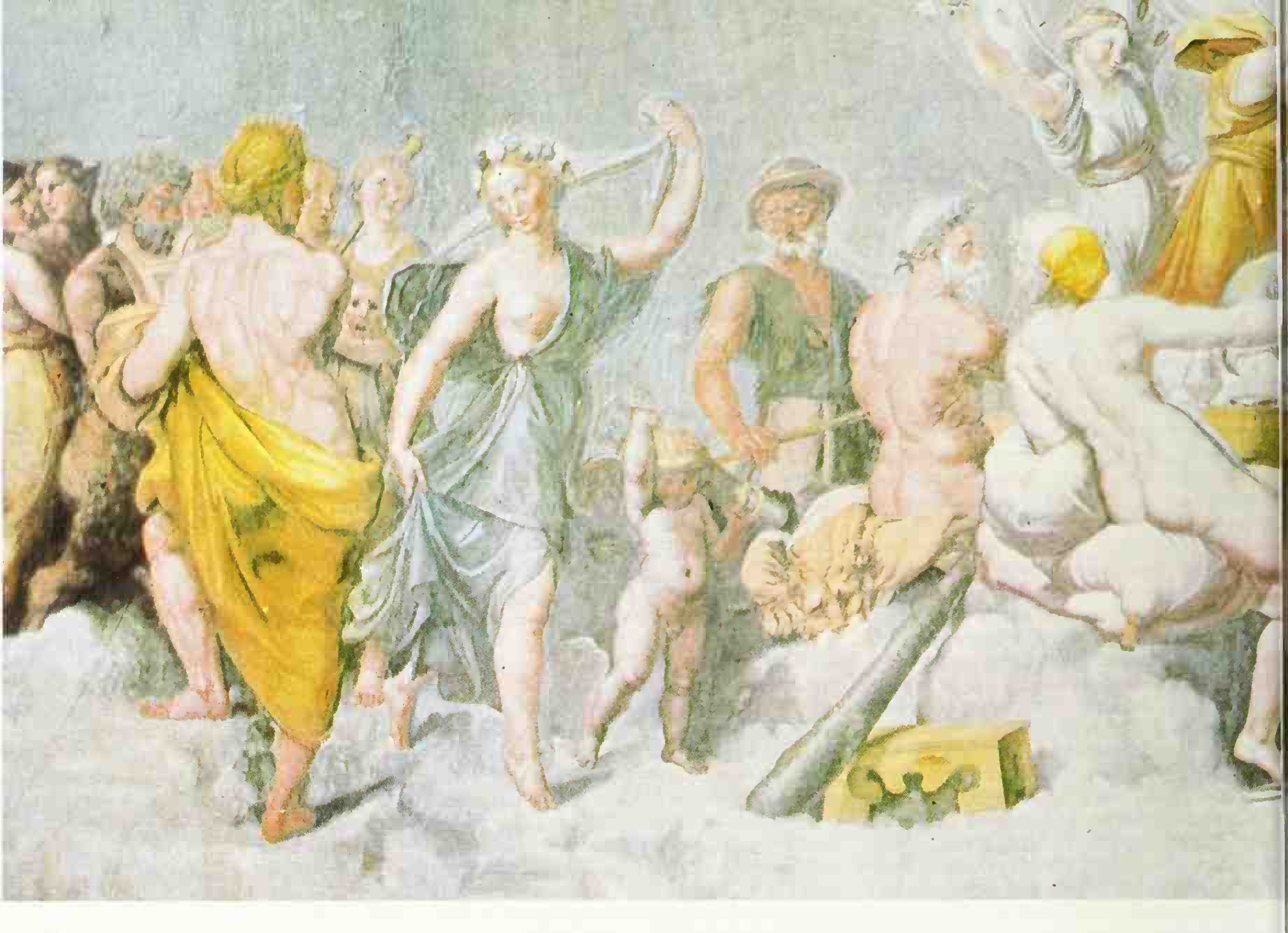
The basic conception is that normal human life is afflicted by sickness and death as a consequence of impurity; and that by gradual purification, by the refining and purging that is an essential part of alchemical theory, it is almost inevitable that the adept will be enabled to overcome

A universal panacea, the Fountain of Youth, the Elixir of Life: the belief in a remedy that will cure all ills and prolong life is deeply-rooted in human nature. Details from Cranach's *The Fountain of Youth* showing (*left*) old women entering the magical waters which transform them (*right*) into young girls





Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin



The immortality of the gods was attributed to the life-preserving qualities of their food and drink, the ambrosia and nectar of the Greek gods, for instance: *The Marriage of Cupid* by Raphael, in the Farnesina Palace, Rome, shows them feasting on Olympus

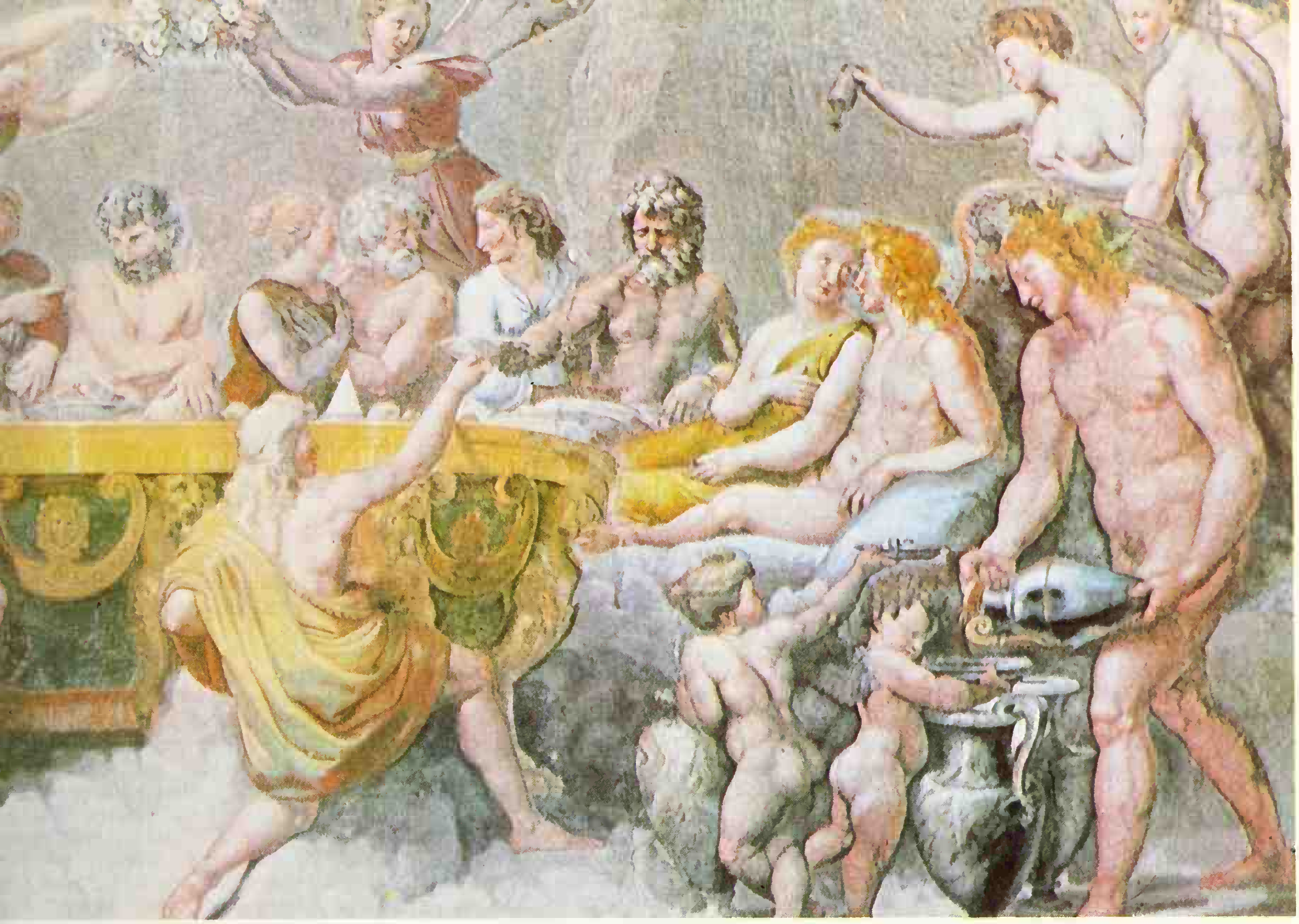
all these earthly imperfections. It follows, then, that this universal remedy must be a tool against all kinds of disease. The panacea must strengthen the vital energy to such a degree that the patient becomes stronger than all afflictions.

Many alchemists have claimed to possess such a secret remedy, including Paracelsus and Jan Baptist van Helmont (1577–1644). Especially in the writings of Paracelsus's disciples, the medical alchemists who cured with the help of inorganic compounds instead of drugs, there is much talk about the mysterious '*tinctura philosophorum*' or Philosophers' Tincture. One of these texts, c 1560, tells us that by the art of the true alchemist the tincture is made, and 'the true aim of the true medical men is the resurrection and regeneration of nature. In order to find this art the tincture of the physician had to be invented miraculously, which up till our days was always secretly used by the true masters of the spagirical art.' The term 'spagyric' is defined as 'made by means of the art to separate and to combine in the right way' – and refers to one basic maxim of alchemy: '*solve et coagula*', dissolve and coagulate. Secret medicines are therefore often called 'spagirical remedies', and apparently the great number of prescriptions, describing the ways of making curious substances out of rare minerals, alcohol, metallic solutions, acids, and so on seem to represent nothing else than substitutes for what was so often talked about – the Elixir of Life.

A strange panacea mentioned in Zedler's *Lexicon* is the 'panacea aqua', which was apparently nothing else than water, distilled several times, without any taste, odour or colour. A certain M. de Villars of Paris was said to have used it to cure many diseases. Other elixirs and panaceas, composed from minerals and rare herbs in the most cases, were ascribed to many other chemists and alchemists. Zedler's encyclopedia refers to a case in which a panacea was used; he speaks of a letter from one of Paracelsus's disciples to a certain M. Michael Neander, relating how on one occasion a woman, in great distress, told the famous doctor that her husband would die in the course of the following night. Paracelsus inspected the patient's urine and then told her: 'Tomorrow your husband will have breakfast together with you and recover again.' Then he took a little portion of a white powder ('white elixir'), and told her to give it to the sick man dissolved in warm beer. The patient would then go into a sweat and become well again – and so it happened.

Many stories of this kind could be told but it is not clear whether they originated in the time of Paracelsus or were later attributed to him. At any rate the Swiss physician himself wrote in his books that he had been able to overcome many terrible diseases. The Dutch alchemist van Helmont tells us that by divine inspiration he had found the true remedy by using the ways of the alchemists, and he called himself '*philosophus per ignem*', meaning 'philosopher through fire'. He stressed his belief that Paracelsus had known the Elixir of Life which he called a universal ferment, necessary for all mixture of the elements and humours. He is said to have cured various diseases by dipping a secret 'stone' into milk or oil which the patients had to drink. Sometimes he speaks of a universal solvent, the 'alkahest', by which he apparently means the same as Elixir and which, in the right concentration, should be able to dissolve everything 'as warm water dissolves ice'.

In a tract ascribed to Paracelsus and published for the first time in 1570, entitled *De Tinctura Physicorum* (On the Tincture of the Physicians) occur the following sentences: 'This is the tincture by which some of the first physicians in Egypt, and afterwards up till our times, have lived for 150 years. The lives of many of them lasted for some centuries, as history clearly teaches, although this does not seem to be true to anybody: because its force is so miraculous, that it is able to enlighten the body . . . and to strengthen him to such a degree that he will remain free of all diseases and, although afflicted by old age, will appear as it had been in his youth. Therefore the *tinctura physicorum* is a universal remedy which devours all sicknesses like a fire devouring wood. Its quantity is tiny, but its force is mighty.' The



Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei

author goes on to claim that he has cured many diseases including leprosy, dropsy and epilepsy.

Prolonging Life to Doomsday

The 17th century French alchemist Jean d'Espagnet, a native of Bordeaux, describes the preparation of this mysterious medicine in the following way: 'Take three parts of red earth (meaning the Philosophers' Stone), water and air, six parts altogether, mix them thoroughly and prepare a metallic paste like butter in which the earth can no longer be felt with the finger. Add one and a half parts of fire and place it into a thoroughly closed vessel and give it fire of the first degree for digestion. Then you prepare an extract of the elements according to the degrees of the fire until they are reduced to a solid earth. The matter becomes like a shining, translucent red stone and then it is ready. Put it into a pot on a modest fire and moisten it by its oil, drop by drop, until it becomes fluent without smoke. Do not be afraid that the mercury will vaporize; the earth drinks the humidity eagerly, because it is a part of its nature. Now you have the elixir ready. Thank God for his grace that he has granted you, use it for his praise and keep the secret.' The meaning of these sentences was probably clear to alchemists of his day but we can hardly guess what substances were referred to when d'Espagnet speaks of adding one and a half parts of fire.

Apparently the belief in the efficacy of the alchemical Elixir was not limited to the time before the beginnings of modern science. The author of *History of Alchemy* (published in 1832), K. C. Schmieder, evidently believed to some degree in the existence of the universal remedy when he wrote about the famous Salomon Trismosin, a mysterious personality said to have lived towards the end of the 15th century: 'He (Trismosin) not only told about the force of the panacea in general, but pointed to certain cases revealing the miracles of it. He regenerated himself by a half grain of it so that his yellow, wrinkled skin became smooth and white, his cheeks red, his grey hair black again, and his bent spine was lifted vertically . . . He was inclined to believe that, using this medicine, human life could be prolonged at one's convenience, probably until Doomsday.' Here Schmeider apparently became sceptical himself, and so he adds: 'Exaggerations, which show a disagreement with Nature, were always the reason that their author was met mistrustfully, and that modern spectators condemned the panaceist together with the alchemist.'

Those rare creatures, the 20th century alchemists, have also not turned away from hopes of the Elixir. In 1917 a Californian couple named Ingalese claimed that they had isolated a substance which they called both Philosophers' Stone and Elixir. Minute doses, they said, acted as a rejuvenator – and they kept themselves hale with it. They also claimed to have used it successfully to 'resurrect' a woman who had been medically dead for a short time.

It is not easy to distinguish between what the alchemist tried to teach in allegories and allusions and should be taken in a higher sense, and – on the other hand – what they were ready to take for granted in a literal sense. The one possibility by no means excluded the other, but it was thought of as a mystical participation of the spiritual with the material aspect. Therefore, if the old texts speak of purification, rectification, refinement and so on, giving the adept miraculous possibilities of influencing his world, then this in the first place is to be taken as a hint of his new spiritual freedom from normal human limitations. At the same time, however, when the opposites, spirit and matter come together, the alchemist was also free to believe in legends such as that of the life-giving and regenerating universal remedy, made from the same 'hidden stone' which can also be used for transforming impure metals into gold.

For us it would be more convenient to think that the ancient alchemists only spoke in allegories when describing the wonderful aspects of the universe one perceives when one is granted ultimate knowledge by God's grace. We would gladly accept these legends as symbols of a purely spiritual immortality, beyond any material affliction, in the face of which one is able to forget all earthly disease and imperfection and to behold only the immaterial light of the purified mind. But such a standpoint would take into account only half of the truth in which the alchemist believed.

If we take the alchemical process in the Jungian sense and explain it by projection

The Wine of Egypt

A great lady, who was also unfortunately for her, an old one, and was unable to resign herself to the fact, was reported to have consulted Cagliostro, who gave her a vial of the precious liquid with the strictest injunction to take two drops when the moon entered its last quarter. Whilst waiting for this period to arrive the lady who desired to be rejuvenated shut up the vial in her wardrobe, and the better to ensure its preservation informed her maid that it was a remedy for the colic. Fatal precaution! By some mischance on the following night, the maid was seized with the very malady of which her mistress had spoken. Remembering the remedy so fortuitously at hand she got up, opened the wardrobe, and emptied the vial at a draught.

The next morning she went as usual to wait on her mistress, who looked at her in surprise and asked her what she wanted. Thinking the old lady had had a stroke in the night, she said –

"Ah, madame, don't you know me? I am your maid."

"My maid is a woman of fifty," was the reply, "and you . . ."

But she did not finish the sentence. The woman had caught a glimpse of her face in a mirror. The Wine of Egypt had rejuvenated her thirty years.

W. R. H. Trowbridge, *Cagliostro: The Splendour and Misery of a Master of Magic*

of a subconscious process onto the surrounding world, then we are quite near to an understanding of the coincidence of the spiritual and the material aspect. A purely spiritual alchemy would never explain the existence of alchemical laboratories in which physicians honestly and fanatically sought for occult medicines. The wish to overcome sickness and pain by having reached a high spiritual stage and by taking part in the divine creative forces is, at any rate, a noble one and therefore we are able to view it more sympathetically than the attempt solely concerned with synthetizing gold.

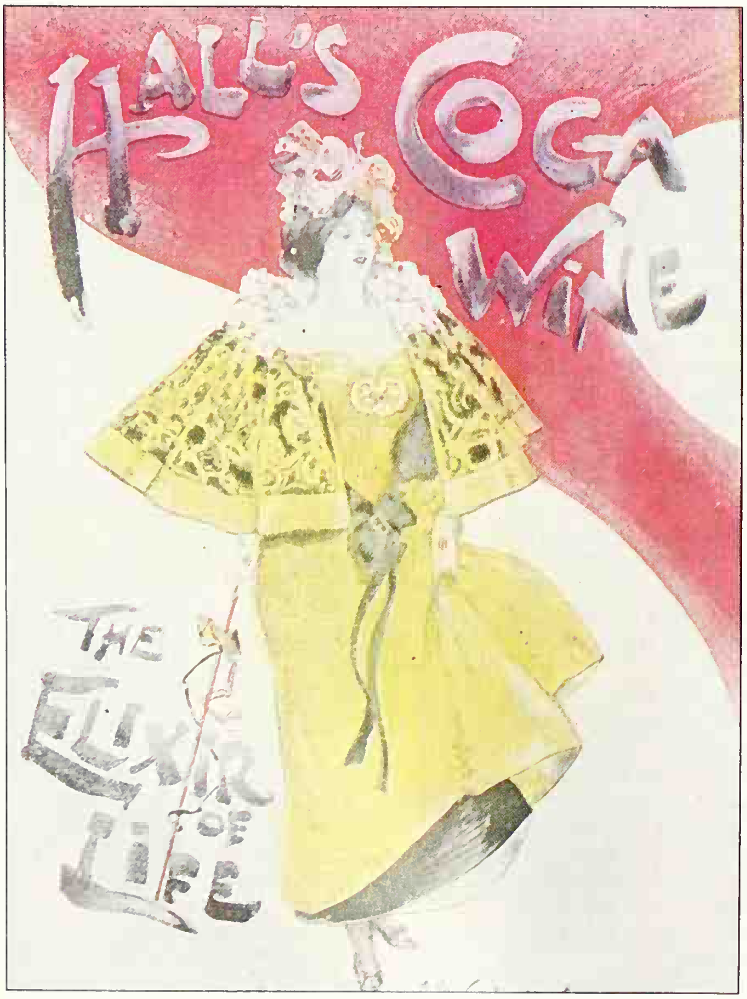
From the early days of Hellenistic alchemy onwards, the final object of the 'philosopher' was to set the *pneuma* (soul) free of its bodily fetters; the pneuma cannot be open to any earthly affliction – therefore if the highest stage in evolution could be attained, sickness would inevitably be overcome. Whatever we are able to accept as true in the alchemical legends of the Elixir of Life, there is no doubt that this ideal ultimate object of the alchemical doctor's endeavours helped to improve his pharmaceutical possibilities.

It is possible that out of the endless striving for the Elixir man gained access to many secrets of Nature; otherwise for long centuries doctors would have been content with their traditional *materia medica* as described in antique herbals. Alchemy, dealing with inorganic matters (which nevertheless for the alchemist were not without a secret life) opened new doors; and if it could not bring into existence a true Elixir of Life it certainly helped man to seek, to labour, to endeavour – and this is the true beginning of all human progress.

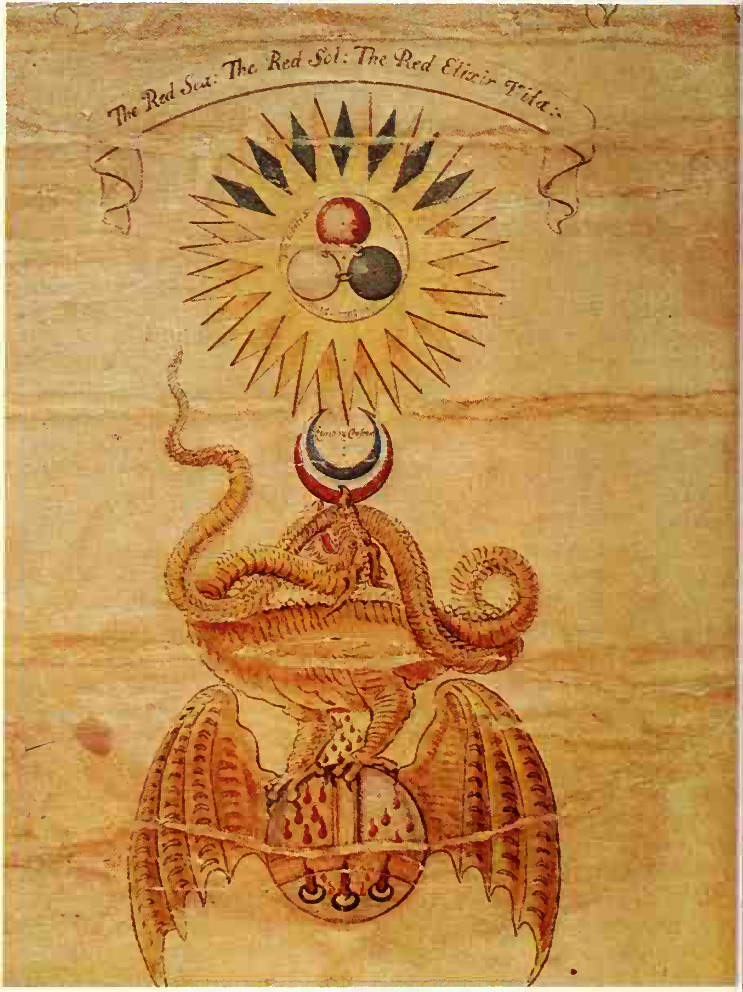
(See also ALCHEMY; MERCURY; PARACELSUS; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

HANS BIEDERMANN

Left Alcohol has long been popular as an elixir: 19th century lithograph advertising Coca wine ***Right*** Alchemists in Europe referred to the Philosophers' Stone as the Elixir of Life, and the appearance in his crucible of the perfect red gold, the Red Elixir, proved to the alchemist that he had created the true stone: ***The Red Sea, the Red Sol, the Red Elixir Vitae***, allegorical illustration from a 15th century treatise



Michael Holford/Victoria & Albert Museum

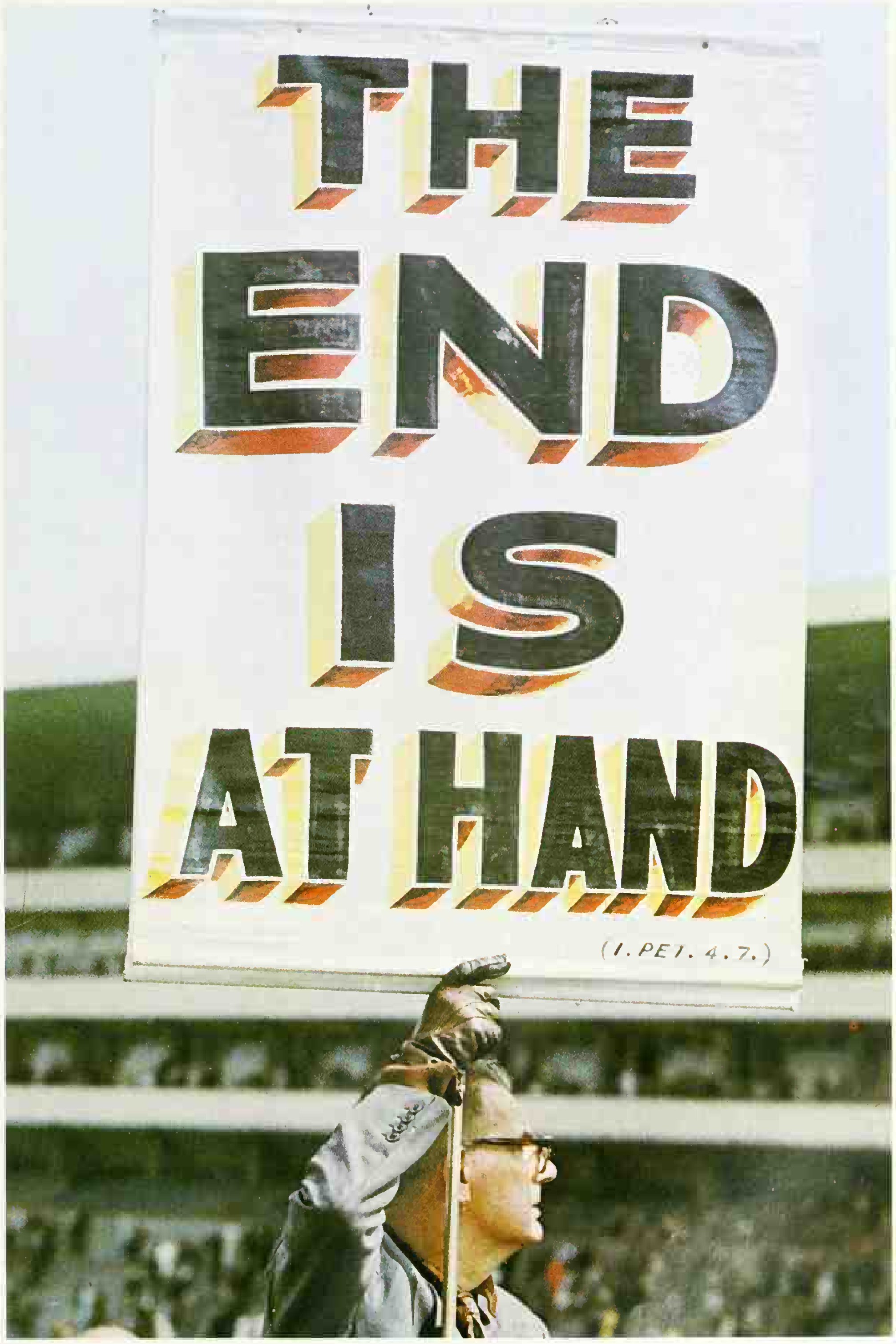

The Red Sea: The Red Sol: The Red Elixir Vita:

END OF THE WORLD

Ian has always been haunted by a sense of the npermanence of this world. The idea that the nal destruction of the cosmos is followed by -creation is common to many religions

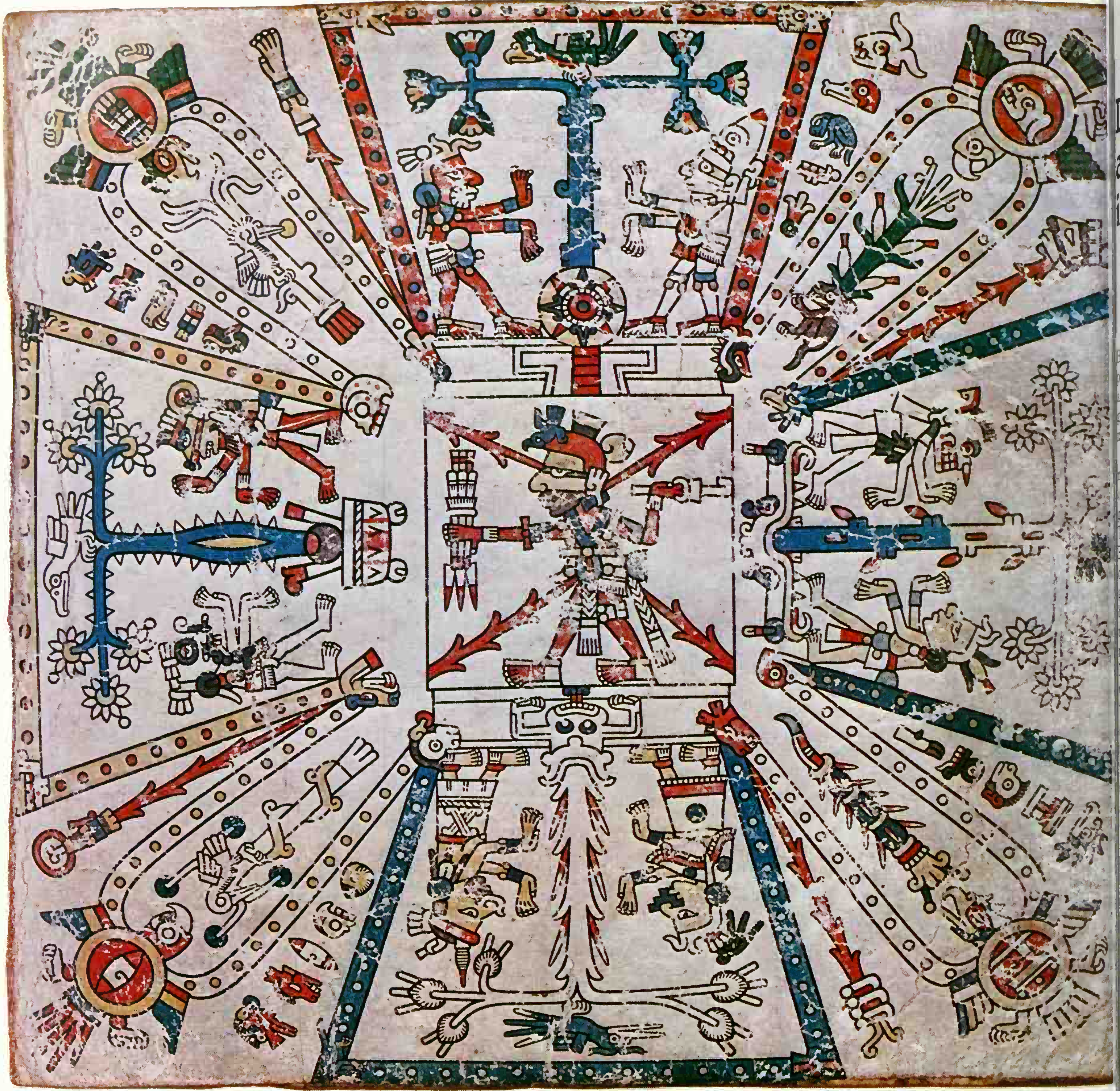
HE RAGGED FANATIC, solemnly carrying s placard announcing that 'The End of the Vorld is at Hand', is an object of ridicule. he image of the mushroom cloud is an ever-resent reality to every sensitive person. etween the two – a very real possibility of n end to the world as we know it and the tempt to pinpoint the end and express it in ythological terms – there is much more ian an accidental connection. Men have eldom been able to believe wholeheartedly n the permanence of the established order, hough they have often poured scorn on the rophet who has dared to remind them of heir doubts. It was so in the early centuries f the Christian era: 'Scoffers will come in the ast days with scoffing, following their own assions and saying, "Where is the promise f his coming? For ever since the fathers fell sleep, all things have continued as they ere from the beginning of creation"' 2 Peter 3.3) and it is so today. The difrence now is that the end of the world, if here is to be an end, is seen as coming about hrough, in some sense, natural causes. In he past, it was held that it would come about hrough supernatural causes and it was ccordingly expressed in mythological terms.

The writer of 2 Peter answered the 'scofers' by pointing out as a 'fact' that the earth ad been created by God out of a watery haos (as related in Genesis 1.1), that hrough this same water 'the world that then xisted was deluged with water and perished' Genesis, chapters 6–8), and that by the ord of God, 'the heavens and earth that ow exist have been stored up for fire, being ept until the day of judgment and destrucon of ungodly men' (2 Peter 3.7). Here we ave a mythological pattern, repeated in nany parts of the world, of creation, destrucon and re-creation, and it is in this perspecve that practically all end of the world nyths must be seen. We may speculate


THE END IS AT HAND
(1. PET. 4.7.)

Picturepoint London

he mushroom cloud of an atomic explosion *eft*) warns of the very real possibility that he world may end in scientifically created haos; but the prophet of disaster (*right*) is till ridiculed today, as he has been through he ages



Each of a series of world ages has ended in cosmic catastrophe, according to Aztec mythology: leaf from the Codex Fejervary-Mayer depicting five world regions, four of which have already been destroyed. In the centre is the region of the present world

interminably as to the origins of such patterns as these, without ever reaching more than a probable theory. However, it seems likely that in primitive man's experience the succession of day and night, summer and winter, rain and drought, heat and cold; the rising and setting of the sun; the phases of the moon; the wanderings of some, at least, of the stars – all contributed to a sense of insecurity with regard to man's tenure of the face of the earth.

There is no lack of evidence to show that primitive man conceived of the cosmic process not as something stable, but as a great and continuous battle between the forces of creation and destruction, order and chaos. The world had been brought into being by supernatural forces out of chaos; and unless these forces were supported – by prayer, sacrifice and other ritual acts – then the world would inevitably return once more to that same chaos. The cosmic order was, however, maintained by the gods (particularly the High Gods of the sky), and should they so choose, it could be brought to an end. The annual festivals of agricultural peoples, with which cycles of myth are intimately associated, were meant to ensure the continued existence of the earth, particularly the seasonal renewal of its fertility and it life. But in the background was always th fear that at some time, to be appointed b the gods, a return to chaos would take place Natural phenomena – hurricanes, floods volcanic eruptions, earthquakes – suggeste the means: man's ritual and moral shortcomings suggested the motive.

Common to a surprisingly large number o races was the conviction that all this had, i fact, happened before. The gods had destroyed the world on certain occasions whe conditions had become so bad as to be unbearable from the gods' own point of view But why should they ever become so bad? N simple answer is possible, except that th ancients were evidently under no illusion regarding the perfectibility of mankind

Destruction is merely the prelude to new life, a wiping clean of the world's slate, n order that a new start may be made

ut even this pessimistic outlook, which laced man's Golden Age in a distant past, nd saw his evolution as a development into reater and more sophisticated iniquity, was ot the whole of the story.

In ancient Babylon, for instance, where an's position in the cosmos paralleled that f the slave in the city-state, it was up to the ods to decide when the end should come. hey had decided before: Sumerian and abylonian–Assyrian mythology had recor- ed the legend of the great Deluge, and of the reat Ark in which Ziusudra (Utnapishtim) ad been saved (compare the Old Testa- ent story of Noah), but had given no cogent oral reasons why this should have been so. or were their end of the world myths any e less arbitrary. In Seneca's words: Berosus (author of a history of Babylon) ys that everything takes place according the course of the planets, and he main- ins this so confidently that he determines e times for the conflagration of the world d for the flood. He asserts that the world ill burn when all the planets which now ove in different courses come together in e Crab, so that they all stand together in a raight line in the same sign, and that the ture flood will take place when the same njunction occurs in Capricorn.' The astro- gical aspect is probably to be explained in rms of identification between the stars and e gods themselves, who were ultimately sponsible for past and future catastrophes.

The link between past and future is to e seen in a slightly different form in the ythology of the Aztecs of Central America ho believed in a series of world ages, each which had so far ended in a cosmic catas- ophe – famine, fire, hurricane and flood spectively. This present age was expected end on the completion of a 52-year cycle d every 52 years special preparations ere made: all fires were extinguished and riests and people ascended a sacred moun- in, waiting for the rise of the Pleiades. nly when this happened could the people be re of safety for another 52 years.

Many South American Indians tell of a milar past catastrophe, though theirs is less sophisticated conception. Usually the isaster is said to have been the sun or oon falling onto the earth, or destruction y fire or by snow and ice. And in most ses the horrors are sent by an angry god r culture hero – and later a few survivors, with supernatural aid, repopulate the earth. Algonquin tribes in North America have a few end-of-the-world tales, envisaging it either as a great fire or a final and all-inclusive battle.

Hindu and Buddhist belief generally looked on the history of the world as consisting in a series of four ages, or *Yugas*, each of enormous length. These have the names *Krita Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dvapara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga*, marked by successive declines in morals, righteousness and piety. By the end of the final age, Kali Yuga, of a Day of Brahma (a thousandfold cycle), Brahmins will have come to neglect their devotions; popular piety will be dead; fire, drought and famine will ravage the earth. Then there will be a century of death, after which the god Vishnu assumes the form of Rudra, the destroyer, and dries up all the moisture on or beneath the earth. There follows a universal conflagration, in which the last vestiges of human occupation disappear from the face of the earth. At last the underworld, earth and heavens disappear also in the vast whirlpool of flame; nothing remains save the eternal and uncreated Brahman. But this is a beginning, as well as an end: the cycle is begun again, and a new series of ages ensues, marked by the same stages, the same decline into sin and lawlessness (*adharma*), and earmarked for the same ultimate fate.

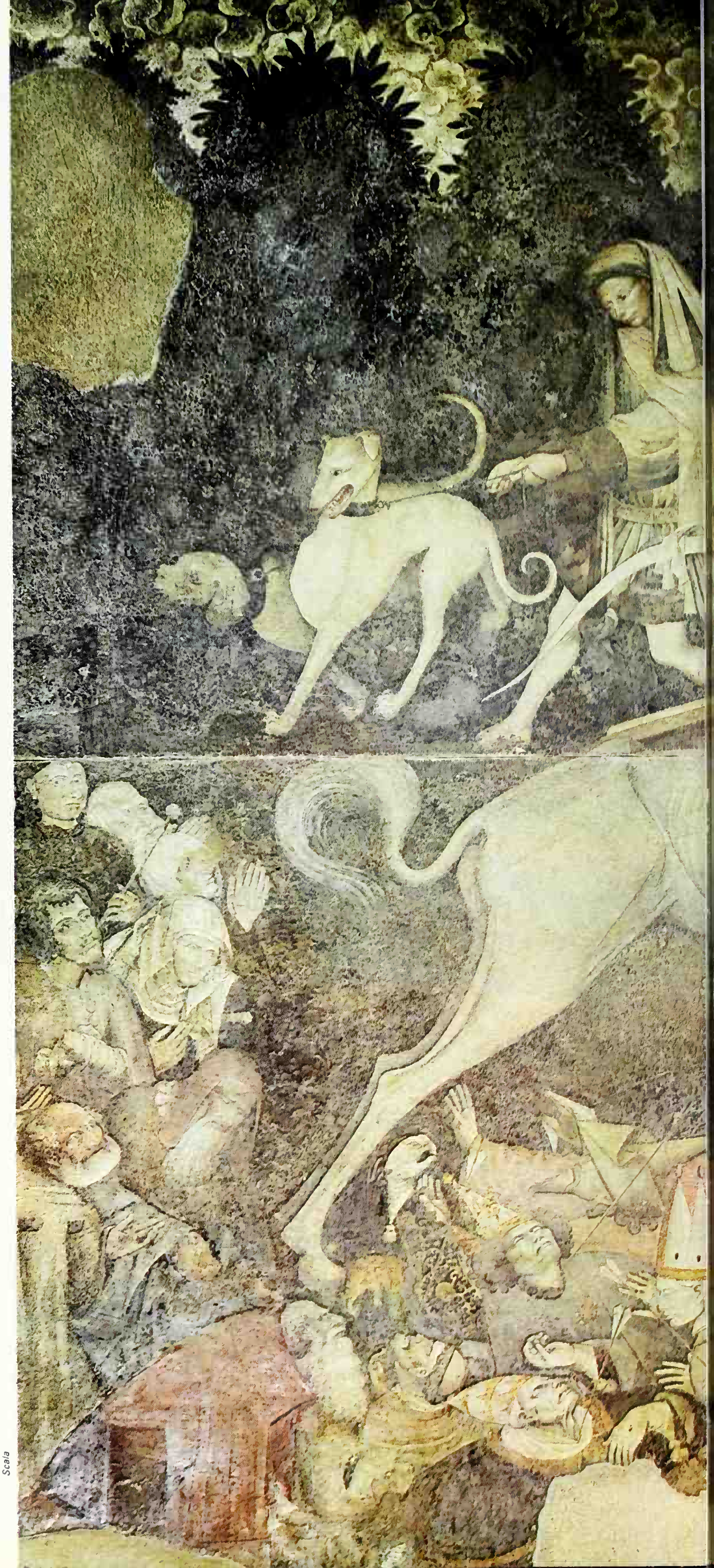
Prelude to New Life

Turning to an entirely different tradition, one of the best known and yet in some ways least understood myths concerning the end of the world is that which is found in the medieval Icelandic sources, and which has to some extent passed into the European consciousness through Wagner's opera *Götterdämmerung* (*The Twilight of the Gods*). The earliest version of this myth ends the first poem in the Poetic (or Verse) Edda, the *Völuspá* (12th century). This is no saga, nor a logically constructed prediction of the 'last times', but rather a poetic apocalypse, perhaps reflecting some of the tension between old and new faiths during the years when Christianity was winning its way into the minds of the Northern peoples. Once more, the end of all things is set in the framework of cosmogony: the beginning and the end are equally important and there are hints of a previous catastrophe, similar to those we have already seen.

The end is heralded by a cock-crow, and has been preceded by the 'Fimbul-winter' – three winters of unprecedented severity. The catastrophe begins to unfold with the death of the blind brother of the slain Balder and the fettering of the evil Loki, and the refrain begins: Garm (the hound of death) howls by the hole of the underworld; the fetter breaks; the wolf runs free. There follows a description of the terrors of the Kingdom of the Dead, and of the moral dissolution of mankind, another consistent element in such myths. Then the cosmic tree Yggdrasill shudders, the hound Garm howls once more, the snake wound round the world begins to stir, and the gods, good and evil alike, begin to assemble for the final battle. Odin is killed by the Fenris wolf but is avenged, briefly, by his son; Thor is killed by the Midgard snake. The sun becomes dark, the earth sinks into the sea, the stars fall from heaven, and fire consumes both Yggdrasill and Valhalla, the home of the slain heroes. All is waste and void.

Then the miracle happens: the earth reappears, purified and fresh, ruled by the sons of the gods; Balder and his brother return, and a high and noble temple-hall shines brighter than the sun. The underworld remains, though eternally cut off from the world of light. Chaos has once more been transcended, as in the moment of the first creation; mankind is once more established on the face of the earth – though a new earth freed from the fetters of the past. It has often been thought that the motif of new creation is not part of the original mythological tradition; and yet, allowing that the myth as we have it is post-Christian, can we not see here the fusing of Indo-European and Judaeo-Christian traditions within the framework of high poetry?

A far different Indo-European view of the end of the world, and yet one which has marked affinities with Hindu beliefs, is found in ancient Greece. The Greek writer Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, speaks of the five ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze, Heroes and Iron, in which there is a gradual descent from joy and innocence to guile, misery and corruption. An elaborate theory of cyclical world history was put forward by Heraclitus (c 500 BC) and later developed by Plato; possibly this theory



According to the New Testament the end of the present world will be heralded by a multitude of signs such as wars, earthquakes and famines. One of the central symbols in the elaborate imagery of the book of Revelation is a scroll sealed with seven seals, the opening of which lets fearful terrors loose upon the world: Death, the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, is given power over a quarter of the world when the fourth seal is opened. Detail from *The Triumph of Death*, a series of frescoes by Francesco Traini

Scala

owes much to Babylonian influence, particularly in respect of the idea of the *magnus annus*, or great year, the period during which eight independently revolving planetary spheres return to their point of departure. In Plato's version, a total revolution in one direction is followed by a revolution in the opposite direction; thus the world as it is known is succeeded by an age of 'history in reverse'.

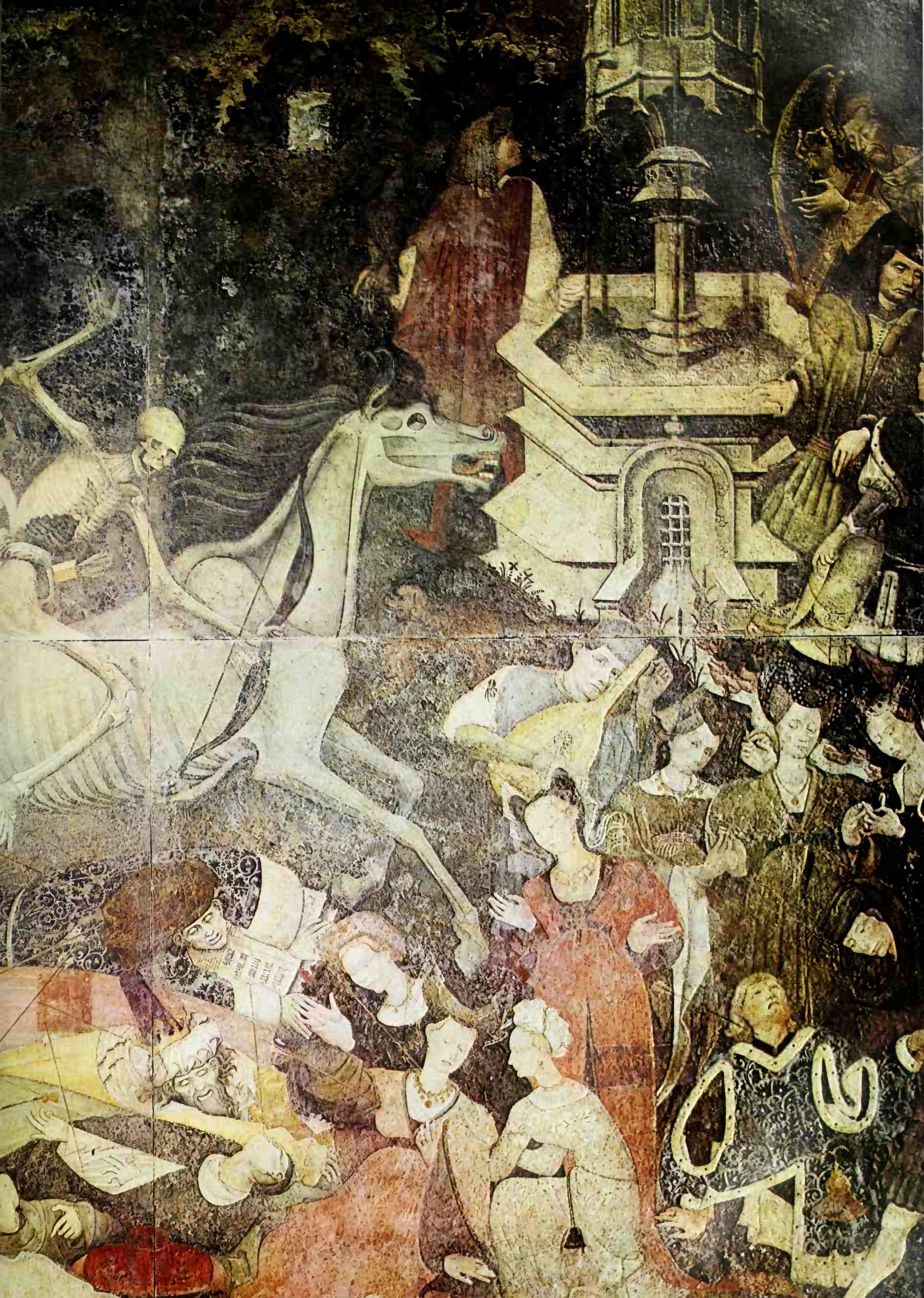
Also from Heraclitus came the notion of a cosmic fire, the *ekpurosis*, into which the world is periodically dissolved, and from which it is born anew. To be sure, the elements from which the world is made are indestructible, and can never be more than temporarily disturbed, returning after the conflagration to the same relationship to one another. But each cycle is none the less distinct, though hardly distinctive: indeed, one corollary of a theory of this kind was that history repeats itself exactly, down to the smallest detail. Every age is subject to the same forces of disintegration and degeneration and each will dissolve in time, only to be recreated. This theory was developed in its most elaborate detail by the Stoic popular preachers of the 2nd century BC and earlier, and passed over into Christianity through the Church Fathers, some of whom even undertook to attempt to prove the doctrine of ekpurosis from the Book of Genesis.

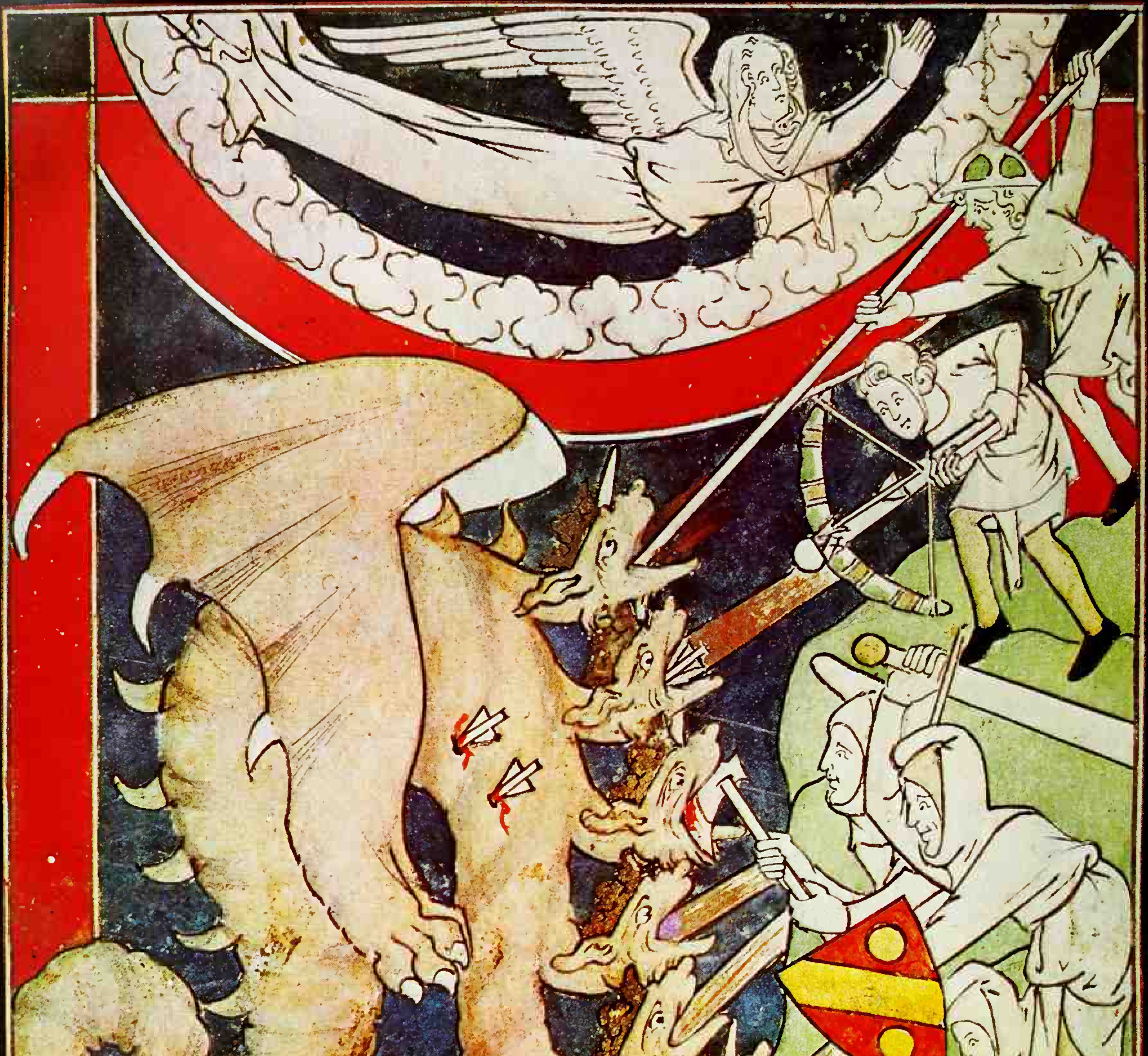
However, the cyclical theories of the Greek philosophers accorded ill with the Judaic tradition out of which Christianity developed, and these were ultimately attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable, so vast were the differences between them.

The Ways of God with Man

Turning now to this Judaeo-Christian stream of tradition, the developed Christian view of the end of the world differs in certain important respects from these other mythologies particularly in that it incorporates no trace of a cyclical view of time. It rests on the Old Testament view that in God's good time a new and better world will emerge out of this present order, thus vindicating God's final sovereignty over creation.

In later Judaism the Old Testament view was to give rise to elaborate time schemes, in which the lengths of this present age and the age of the Messiah to





THE FALL OF BABYLON 1932 1937
ARMOR OF THE ORDER
THE POPE

Mansell Collection

come – both preceding the ultimate vindication of the sole and absolute authority of God – were calculated with much precision and not a little imagination. The sequence was: first the present age, characterized by increasing moral turpitude (by now a familiar element); secondly, heralded by great tribulations, the messianic age here on earth, in which righteousness and peace are established throughout creation; and finally, the accomplishment by God of the ultimate act of new creation.

On the practical level, the problem in late Judaism was to reconcile the wisdom, power and justice of God with the actual misfortunes of Israel in the 1st century AD. An elaborate justification of the ways of God with man is contained in 2 Esdras (Apocrypha); beginning with man, with Adam, it then continues with the question 'When have the inhabitants of the earth not sinned in thy sight?' and its answer, 'Thou mayest indeed find individuals who have kept thy commandments, but nations thou wilt not find' (3.35), and ending with the vision: '. . . faithfulness shall flourish, and corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which has been so long without fruit, shall be revealed' (6.27). The point here is, however, not that the world is going to come to an end, but that past and future alike are in the hands of God, and that the consummation is the responsibility of the Lord of history, just as was creation. The process is planned, and not haphazard.

It is against this background that Christian ideas concerning the end of the world must be viewed. The framework of the absolute sovereignty of God is identical. So, too, is the pattern of the three ages: this present age; the age to come inaugurated by the emergence of Jesus as Messiah – 'in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son' (Hebrews 1.2) – and the age to come consummated by the second appearance of Jesus Christ in power and glory.

In this present age men are helpless, being under the sway of angels, principalities and powers in enmity to God. The coming of Christ heralds the gradual breaking of the power of these evil spirits. Characteristic of this new age are certain 'powers' such as the conquest of sin, suffering and disease.

The consummation of the new age so far as the vast majority of mankind is concerned – those who have either not heard or not heeded the Gospel – will come 'like a thief in the night' (Thessalonians 5.2); in this passage Paul echoes Jesus's words, 'the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect' (Luke 12.40). But although the actual end may be unexpected, there will have been ample signs heralding its advent: wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes and famines. The subsequent crisis will be cosmic: '. . . after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling down from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory'; 'Heaven and earth will pass away . . .' (Mark, chapter 13).

Alpha and Omega

There seems little doubt that the idea of the immediate end of the world passed into the consciousness of the Christian Church direct from the teaching of Jesus himself. It is prominent in Paul and certain of the later books of the New Testament: '. . . the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up' (2 Peter 3.10); and, of course, in the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation adds little of

Facing page A woman, pursued by 'the great dragon . . . that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan' is given the wings of an eagle in order to escape him; the monster makes war on her offspring: illustration of a passage from the Apocalypse in a French manuscript

Through the ages there have been sects and individuals who have predicted the imminent end of the world *Above left* 'The Noah of Washington Mud Flats': convinced that a second Flood would occur in 1936, he built a gigantic Ark and equipped himself with demon-proof armour *Above right* Believing that the conjunction of eight planets in 1962 foretold global disaster, members of the Aetherius Society climbed a mountain in England's Lake District to pray

substance, however, to the shorter and more cryptic accounts found in other New Testament books, although its imagery is considerably more elaborate. One central symbol is that of the scroll sealed with seven seals; on the opening of the sixth seal there is an earthquake, the sun becomes 'black as sackcloth', the stars fall and the people run in terror; the seventh seal produces silence in heaven for a half-hour, then seven angels send seven torments, the 'seven bowls of the wrath of the Lord'. Nevertheless, these and similar convulsive symptoms are not really the point of the narrative, which is to proclaim the passing away of the old order and the coming of the new: 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away' (Revelation 21.1). Of no less importance is the agency – the direct action of God – by which this radical renewal is accomplished: 'And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new . . . I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end".' (Revelation 21.5-6) .

Broadly speaking, the Christian Church, while continuing to believe in a vague way in the final summing up of all things in Christ, has long refused to concern itself with the details of the end of the world. There have been exceptions, of course: recurrent periods of biblical orthodoxy have given rise to more or less extravagant claims that the end is in sight. One example of the new mythology which such concerns have brought in their wake is found in the writings of Thomas Burnet (1635?-1715), who reflected in his *Sacred Theory of the Earth* that the destructive fires would be kindled at Rome, the seat of the Antichrist, and would be aided and abetted by all the sources of fire in the world. Since the soil of Britain contains so much coal, he concluded, it would be preferable to be elsewhere when that day dawns.

ERIC J.SHARPE

FURTHER READING: J.Ballie, *The Belief in Progress* (Scribner, 1951); M.Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium* (Yale Univ. Press, 1974); R.H.Hiers, *Jesus and the Future* (John Knox, 1981); S.G.F.Brandon, *The Judgement of the Dead* (Scribner, 1969).

ENOCHIAN

WHEN JOHN DEE and Edward Kelley carried out their prolonged series of 'angelic conversations' in the 1580s (see DEE), Kelley, who acted as the medium, claimed that, on looking into Dee's 'shewstone', he perceived an angel pointing out letters and figures on a board. He dictated these to Dee, who in turn would write them down.

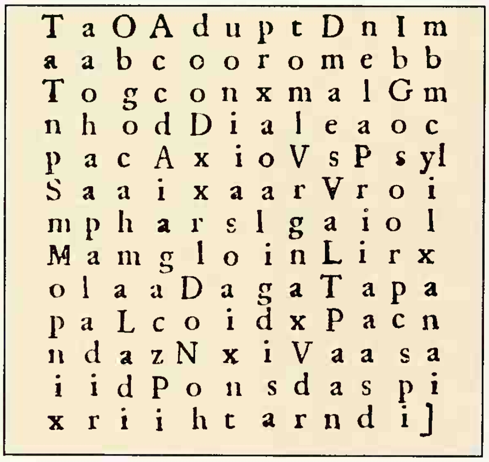
By this means Kelley received a vast amount of material, which included:

> Nineteen invocations by which angels were to be summoned; these were known as 'Keys' or 'Calls', and were in an unknown language called Enochian.
>
> Translations of these Calls.
>
> An Enochian alphabet, comprising 21 letters.
>
> A set of more than 100 large squares, each divided into an array of smaller squares – usually 2401 (49 x 49) – containing letters and figures. These made up what was called the *Liber Logaeth*, and were the means by which Dee took down Kelley's dictation.

The work was long and arduous. Dee had to find the appropriate table of squares, identify the square visualised by Kelley, and write down the letter in that square. To complicate matters further, the Enochian messages were dictated backwards. Nevertheless at least 26 books were dictated in this fashion, although even Dee found some impossible to translate.

The first was the Book of Enoch, consisting of 49 tables, each of 2401 squares. Dee persisted, for he was told that, if he successfully interpreted the dictated texts, 'he will have as many powers subject to him as there are parts of the book, in which every element hath forty-nine manners of understanding...Therein is comprehended so many languages they are all spoken at once and severally themselves, by distinction, may be spoken.'

Of the nineteen Calls, the first two (that is, the nineteenth and eighteenth, for in Enochian magic everything occurs in reverse order) conjure up the 'spirit'; the next sixteen invoke the four elements; and the last is used to invoke any of the thirty Aethyrs. Eventually Kelley was informed of the names of all thirty, and of the angels that governed them. The dominion of the Aethyrs 'extendeth in ever-widening circles without and beyond the Watch Towers of the Universe.'



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A smaller Enochian table, 12 x 13 squares, dictated by Kelley in Cracow, Poland, in 1584

Here is an example of part of the nineteenth Call:

Madariatza das perifa Lil cabisa micaolazoda saanire caosago od fifia balzodizodarasa iada. This is translated: 'O you heavens which dwell in the first air, you are mighty in the parts of the earth, and execute the judgment of the highest.'

The origins of the Enochian language have puzzled scholars for centuries. Many have dismissed it as gibberish, but it seems to have a defined syntax and vocabulary. It has been suggested that it derives from the *Stenographia* of Trithemius (1462-1516), who was abbot of Spanheim in Germany. This book, with its invocations of angels and spirits, was at that time widely regarded as a manual of demonic magic, but is nowadays considered a treatise on cryptography – and Dee, who was certainly involved in spying for Elizabeth I, regarded it highly.

However, there is no reference to Enochian before Dee's lifetime, and no record of its further elucidation before it was re-discovered and taken up by the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN) around 1875. Extraordinary claims were made for it by 'Fratre Sub Spe' (Dr J.W.Brodie-Innes): 'Here is a language which has existed as far back as we are able to trace. We find traces of it on rock-cut pillars and on temples, apparently as old as the world. We find traces of it in the sacred and secret mysteries of some of the oldest religions in the world, but we find no trace of it ever having been used as a living language, and we hold the tradition that it is the Angelic secret language.'

Israel Regardie, another member of the Golden Dawn, and later secretary to Aleister Crowley, detected traces of 'the older tongue which lies beyond Sanskrit', and compiled a dictionary of Enochian. The hand of L.MacGregor Mathers can be detected, particularly in the relationships established with Hebrew, the Cabala (see CABALA), the four elements, the Tarot cards (see CARDS) and even the 'Theban' alphabet that features in the so-called Grimoire of Honorius and Francis Barrett's *The Magus* (see BARRETT).

Most bizarre of all, perhaps, was the invention of Enochian chess, which utilised four boards and pieces in the shape of Egyptian god-forms. The game required four players, and Joseph Hone, the biographer of W.B.Yeats (see YEATS), describes an evening in the Mathers household:

> Yeats' partner was Mrs Mathers, Mathers' a spirit. Mathers would shade his eyes with his hand and gaze at the empty chair at the opposite corner of the board before moving his partner's piece.

Aleister Crowley, who was also for a time a member of the Golden Dawn, believed himself a reincarnation of Edward Kelley, and later employed the Enochian Calls in his magical workings, using a golden topaz set into the centre of a wooden cross as his shewstone. 'I held this, as a rule, in my hand. After choosing a spot where I was not likely to be disturbed, I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key and, after satisfying myself that the invoked forces were actually present, made the topaz play a part not unlike that of the looking-glass in the case of *Alice*.'

In Algeria with Victor Neuburg in 1909, Crowley, using the Enochian Calls, claimed to have invoked 'a most frightful monster'. More recently, Anton Szandor LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan in San Francisco, has published his own version of the Calls, in which the name of God is throughout replaced by that of Satan.

Any religious sect which claimed to be inspired or possessed by God and which gave free rein to its exalted feelings ran the risk of being called enthusiastic' – a derogatory term in the 18th century, when the classical virtue of moderation was greatly admired

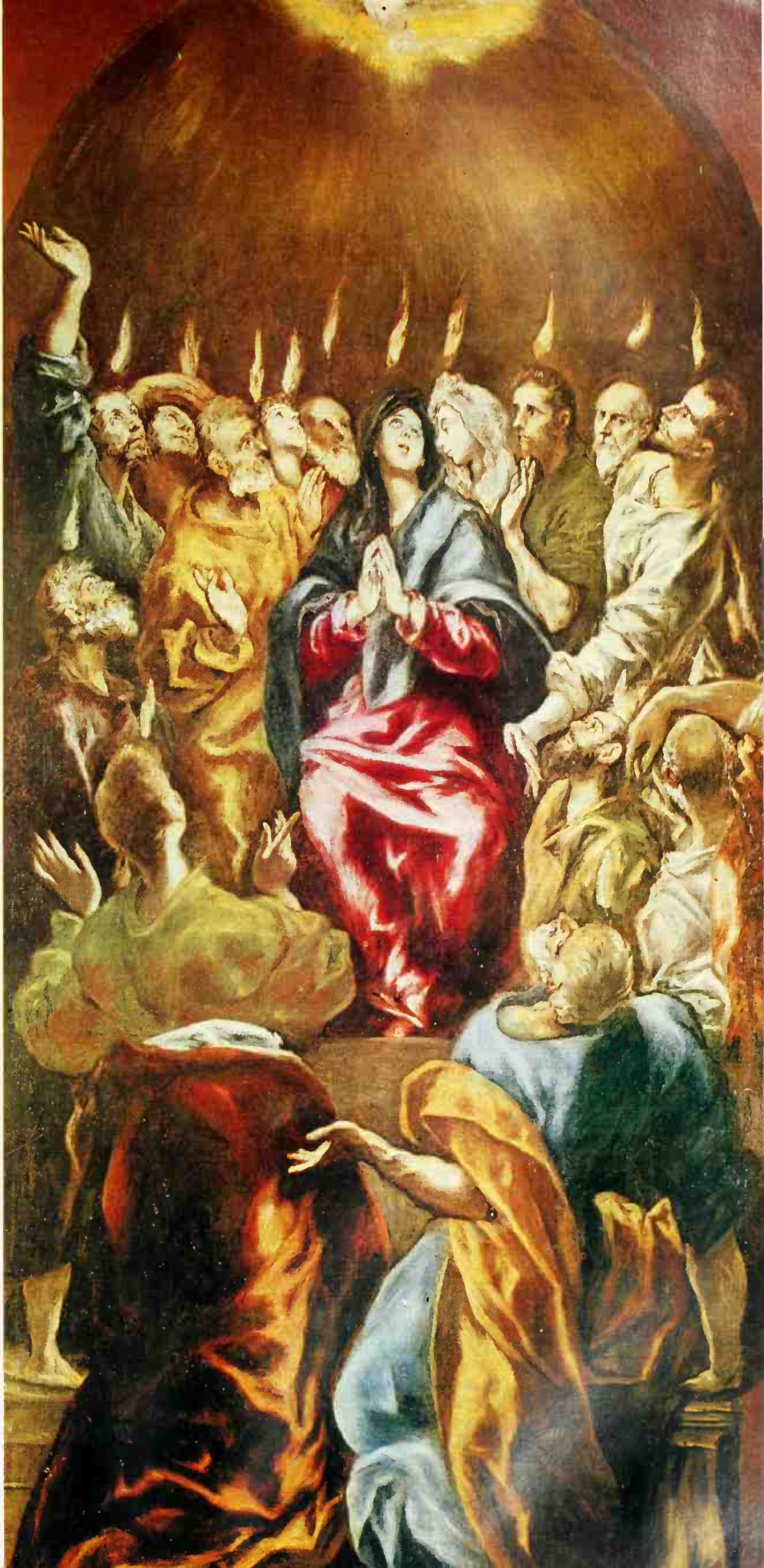
ENTHUSIASM

THE TERM 'ENTHUSIASM' was originally a description of the psychic state of a man who knew that a god dwelt within him, and was applied in this sense to religious phenomena in ancient Greece. In the development of Christianity, the term became much more generally employed for many kinds of religious excitation, and in the 18th century in particular it became a widely used term applied by the orthodox in a derogatory sense to those Christians (usually sectarian) who gave free expression to their exalted religious feelings and who sought to communicate them to others. Many different types of religious belief and practice were labelled 'enthusiastic', and it became common to regard as enthusiasts any who claimed prophetic gifts, or inspiration, or whose beliefs led them to dramatic acts of self-display.

Strictly, however, enthusiasm is not simply religious fervour, fanaticism or intense emotional commitment to heterodox beliefs: it is the conviction of the inward presence of the divine which then justifies the expression and action, and the emotional fervour, of the individual. Religious leaders who claim direct divine inspiration, or possession by the god, may also be properly regarded as enthusiasts. In deference to popular usage, however, it must be conceded that any religious commitment of a heterodox kind, in which strong emotional expression is encouraged, may, even if there is no assertion of possession, be regarded as a type of enthusiasm.

But even on this wider definition, it is clear that those whose faith rests on the Scriptures, even if they employ a very divergent interpretation of their own, or who believe that God's word is the only form of revelation that is now available to mankind, are not to be regarded as enthusiasts, however fervently they may canvass their beliefs. In these respects, the designation 'enthusiasm' cuts across other classifications of sects, while, on the other hand, it leaves some saints of the Roman Church, such as St Teresa, for example, who were convinced of their close relations with God, very near to an enthusiastic position.

Sects such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians who, however devout and intense they might be about their beliefs, do not believe that their warrant for faith is



Pentecostalists in the early 20th century came to believe that after the baptism of the Holy Spirit converts might be given the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues, as the Apostles were on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on them: painting by El Greco, showing tongues of fire above the Apostles' heads, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove

dependent on direct revelation but is based essentially on the Bible, are not to be counted as enthusiasts. They claim no inner illumination, and no source apart from the Scriptures for their beliefs. But the term is more appropriately applied to Holiness and Pietistic groups who claim some inward sense of the Spirit, and, by extension, to those groups that emphasize the prospect of the individual's attaining, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, a sense of assurance about his own salvation and sanctification in his earthly life (see also HOLINESS CHURCH).

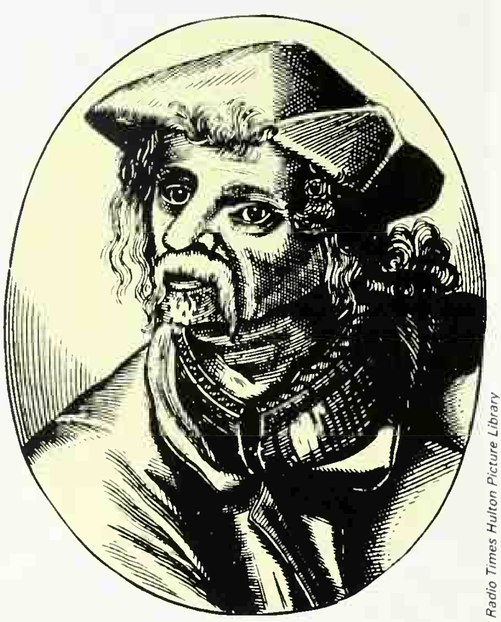
Among the early Christian heresies, some were in the strict sense manifestations of enthusiasm. The Montanists, who originated in Asia Minor in the 2nd century AD and appeared likely to become a sect large enough to threaten the continuity of orthodox Christianity itself, were enthusiastic both in the claims of their founder, Montanus – who declared himself to be the incarnation of the Holy Ghost – and in the visionary experiences that were a commonplace among some of those who became his followers. The special prophecy of the movement was the coming of the millennium, and thus, as in many other cases, millennial beliefs were embraced by a distinctly enthusiastic religion (see MONTANISTS).

From Messenger to Messiah

Movements spawned by the inspiration of prophets were often enthusiastic in the theological justification they invoked. Not infrequently a movement that began on the basis of scriptural prophecies became enthusiastic as the personal claims of the leader became inflated by success. Men who began as messengers or expositors of the Word, or critics condemning the laxness of the Church and the licentiousness of the clergy, sometimes steadily shifted the warrant for their preaching as their followers grew in number and came increasingly to adulate their leader. From being mere expounders of scripture, they sometimes became men inspired by God, who saw visions and experienced revelations: sometimes they even claimed to be the actual Messiah.

Tanchelm, a notary from the court of a Flemish nobleman in the early 12th century, began as a holy man condemning the wealth of the Church and the tithes that it exacted from the people. He acquired a following in the regions around Utrecht and Antwerp, and steadily advanced in his own claims until he held that he was possessed of the Holy Spirit in the same measure as Jesus had been. His bath water was drunk by his followers for its special holy potency and remedial quality, and he was surrounded by a body of retainers and partisans who persisted in their convictions about his divinity long after he had been killed by a priest in 1115.

The claim to be the special emissary of God was not an uncommon one among the sectarian leaders of medieval Europe and many religious movements arose because men believed in the divine endowment of one or more leaders. The limitations of literacy, communication and organization meant that many of these movements were movements in almost the literal sense of the word, as men followed a leader whom they identified with the Messiah to what they believed would be the promised land, or the place where the saints would gather when the earth was destroyed. As movements they were highly unstable, dependent on the blind trust of followers and on the competence of the leaders in maintaining faith and avoiding capture. Claims of personal spiritual power, and the faith that sustains them, are not readily amenable to discipline and steady commitment; and until modern times such movements often consisted of either loose congeries of meetings and itinerant preachers with secret doctrines, or of sudden dramatic outbursts of fervour that led to suppression and sometimes to warfare. One of the best known outbursts occurred at Munster, Westphalia in 1534 (see ANABAPTISTS).


Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Melchior Rinck, an Anabaptist: thorough-going enthusiasts, some members of this sect believed themselves to be the prophets of God

Besieged for their Beliefs

No preacher of the time showed greater capacity for the development of his own teachings than Melchior Hofmann, a furrier who had become a self-appointed lay preacher in his wanderings over northern Europe and the Baltic cities. At one time a staunch Lutheran, within the course of a very few years Hofmann came to adopt increasingly radical positions: he accepted the need for adult baptism, and then asserted the impossibility of obtaining forgiveness for sin committed after adult baptism. He preached the early end of the existing dispensation and the coming of the millennium, and he eventually designated Strasbourg as the city of hope at the time of the end. Finally, he declared himself to be the new Elijah, and designated one of his followers Enoch: claims that approach enthusiasm in the narrower sense of the word. The Melchiorites, as his followers were known, were only a pale foreshadowing of the enthusiasm that was to break out at Munster, and which invoked Hofmann as its prophet, although he remained imprisoned in Strasbourg and eventually disavowed the Anabaptists at Munster.

The earliest advocates of the Reformation in Holland, before the views of Calvin were adopted, were Anabaptists. They stressed the importance of baptizing only those capable of responsible belief. Many of them espoused a position known as sacramentism: that God was in the true saints and they in him, and consequently they had no need for the performance of the Eucharist, nor of effigies, since they already professed to enjoy a higher inner sacrament and an inner apprehension of God. This was thorough-going enthusiasm, and its more extreme exponents maintained not only that God was in the saints, but that they were prophets. Thus, John Mathijs, a baker from Haarlem, who regarded Hofmann as his mentor, declared that he, the new Enoch, was commissioned by the Holy Spirit directly. At the bidding of the Spirit he put aside his wife and took up with a young girl who was reputedly very knowledgeable in the Scriptures. In the licence he permitted himself in conjugal matters he continued an older tradition of enthusiasm and foreshadowed the disposition to 'spiritual wivery' of some later enthusiasts.

Mathijs sent his 'apostles' to Munster to urge re-baptism on the radical Lutheran priest, Bernard Rothman, who already dominated a town divided between radical townsfolk, a conservative Lutheran city council, and the Roman Catholic Bishop with the monastic clergy who remained loyal to him. Rothman embraced the Anabaptist teaching, and his radical call for Christians to share their possessions with others drew in many impoverished countryfolk to Munster eager for immediate advantage and also for a part in the millennium to come. Mathijs himself ruled the city for a few weeks in 1534, vindicating his decisions by calling them inspiration from God. He was killed fighting with the besieging troops, apparently under the illusion that God would enable him to destroy all those who opposed him.

Mathijs was succeeded by one of his 'apostles', John Beukels (or Bockelson) known also as John of Leyden, who declared himself to be the voice of the Lord, and who imposed stricter communism of goods on all the saints. He also introduced polygyny – the practice of men being allowed to have several wives at the same time – which was partly justified from the Old Testament but which may also have been a practical measure to ensure that the superfluity of women (which increased as men were killed in defence of the city) was gathered under some man's protection. Beukels was crowned king of the new Zion, the new David, and the Messiah of the Last Days. Despite the conditions of siege under which Munster suffered, he found time to establish an elaborate court, to mint gold and silver coins, some of which bore the legend 'The Word has become Flesh and dwells in us', to serve splendid banquets, although most of the people were starving;

and to hold processions and parades. Faith in Beukels may have waned in the fearful last days of the siege before the insurrection was crushed, but some of the leaders remained Anabaptists to the end despite torture.

The Free Spirit

A more diversified form of enthusiasm is to be found in the tradition of perfectionism in Christianity, which has a long history from the Middle Ages to the end of the 19th century in many different movements. The adepts of the Free Spirit in the Middle Ages claimed perfection because they possessed the Holy Spirit, and this freed them from normal restraints and conventions. As the most ethereal representation of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost lifts the concept of possession to a distinctly metaphysical plane on which the idea can be represented in ways close to the claims of Christian orthodoxy. The votaries of the Free Spirit maintained that possession of the Spirit rendered them pure and incapable of sinning. They rejected the concept of sin as one which stemmed from uninspired men, and one which had no application to the Spirit-possessed. They could say with St Paul – although such movements found little need for justification from scripture – 'Unto the pure, all things are pure'. They held that God was in all their acts, even in those that men called sin, and some of them maintained that it was thus lawful for them, according to the higher law that applied to them, to do things forbidden to others.

The particular conduct that the Brethren of the Free Spirit condoned by reference to their spiritual state was free sexual relations. They maintained that they could not sin by having sexual relations with any person, even including members of their own families. How widely such conduct was engaged in is of course difficult to assess, but in the 14th century the teachings of the Free Spirit were espoused in many parts of Europe, sometimes accompanied by licentious conduct. Some undisciplined companies of roving mendicants known as Beghards espoused the teaching and recruited religious lay-women, including some who became known as 'Beguines', to the doctrine and its mysteries.

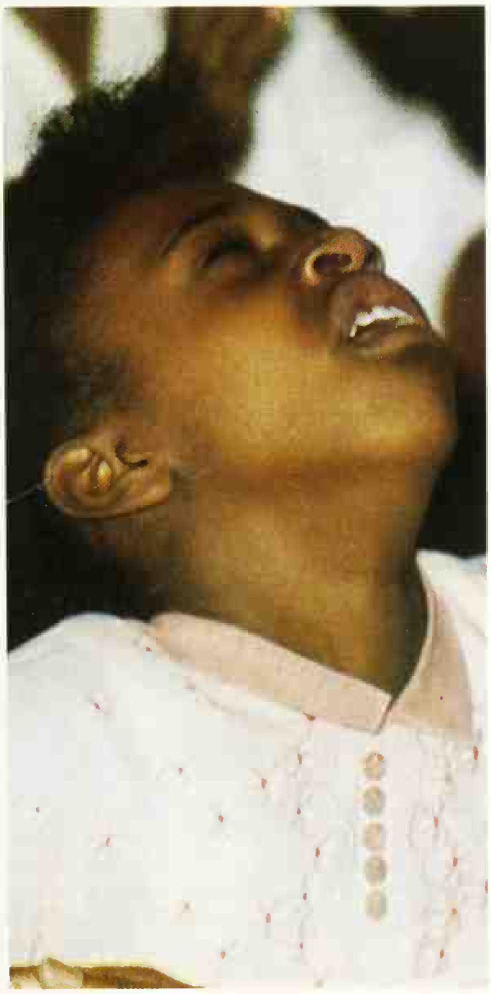
The advocates of the doctrine maintained that a man who knew he possessed the Spirit was already in heaven: hell was to be ignorant of one's own divinity. Some certainly believed that all men might realize this condition, and some believed that the dissemination of the teaching would itself usher in the millennium. Nonetheless there was also an elitist implication in the doctrine. Adepts distinguished between those who realized that they possessed God now, and those who would discover union with God only after death. Some suggested that Christ had not attained the full perfection that they had realized – for the perfect man was God, beyond the power of any to distinguish them. At times some of them declared that they were greater than God, since without their recognition of God he could not exist. For most of them, their direct awareness of the divine permitted them to regard the Scriptures as entirely superseded in legitimating their religious belief and practice.

The movement of the Free Spirit did not give rise to a distinct sect. Its votaries remained amorphously associated, gathering in small fraternities, and embracing many different beliefs and practices. Illuminism, the claim to possess an inner light, as a teaching permits precisely this diversity among the faithful, and makes difficult the establishment of coherent creeds and stable organization. But the ideas of the Free Spirit recrudesce in various periods and places in Christian history. Ideas of recapturing the innocence of a pristine state of nature have frequently been associated with Free Spirit teachings, since before the Fall there was neither good nor evil.

God's Woman

The Quaker James Nayler, who entertained self-conceptions of his own Messiahship and who entered Bristol riding on a donkey in 1656, might be said to have been an enthusiast who took the Quaker doctrine of the inward light further than has been the practice of Quakers since then. Even apart from such aberrant excess, there is an element of essential enthusiasm in Quaker teaching.

The extent to which the Quakers invoke a typically enthusiastic justification for their religious practices is limited, and this is true of other groups that have legitimized their positions by claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There is a distinction, although it is not one that popular usage has always acknowledged, between possession by a deity and inspiration from a deity. Holy Spirit inspiration has been claimed in many movements that lay greater stress on the Scriptures than do the Quakers (except during their evangelical period in the mid-19th century).



Religious enthusiasm can rise to a pitch where members of the congregation fall into trances

William Sargant

In the revivalist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries, in Britain and the United States in particular, there was an element of enthusiasm in the theological sense, and remarkable manifestations of it in the popular sense. In the teaching of John Wesley, the emphasis that a man could not only be saved but could receive assurance of his salvation might be regarded as an attenuated form of enthusiasm. At revivals, prayers were often made for the Holy Spirit to descend into the hearts of men and convert them, while the idea of men becoming deities has echoes in a number of Christian sects in which the faithful are identified with the Church on earth and referred to as 'the bride of Christ'. Even a movement as far removed from the enthusiastic as Jehovah's Witnesses approaches this type of association with the deity in referring to its own elite as 'God's Woman' – the collective body of the faithful who will join Jehovah in his heavenly rule over the new earth.

Salvation is often represented in sexual imagery of this kind, and is consummated in union with the divine which has at least some implications of deification of the truly elect. In the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) salvation by deification is given even more explicit expression: Mormons hold that God himself was once as men now are and only gradually evolved as God. They believe that all faithful Mormons will themselves progress in the afterlife until they all become gods.

These teachings are, however, all rather more oblique ways of presenting the idea that men will experience deity directly than are the teachings espoused by Holiness groups and Pentecostalists, in which a direct experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit is awaited, which will be made manifest to others. This teaching stands in direct descent from a more muted form of enthusiasm alluded to earlier as part of the conversionist and revivalist tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Morbid Images and Symptoms

The doctrines of a number of central European Pietists (believers in the need for a revival of piety) in the Lutheran tradition contained elements of an almost enthusiastic kind. When, in the 1720s, Count Zinzendorf gave asylum on his estates at Herrnhut in Saxony to the Moravian Brethren, he infused them with something of his own style of Pietism. Zinzendorf's teachings of grace were an extremely diluted form of enthusiasm when compared with the excesses recorded in earlier centuries, but he believed that since Christ had suffered for men, so men were now free to adore God; the experience of conversion was therefore to be a joyous one as the believer was reunited with Christ.

This faith emphasized feeling above any kind of thinking or theorizing, particularly in dwelling on Christ's sufferings. Moravian hymns were preoccupied with Christ's wounds, particularly with his wounded side, which was referred to as the 'holy side-wound', the 'unfathomable side-hole' in which believers would 'greet each other'. The idea of grace which Moravians strongly maintained falls short of asserting that the believer is possessed by his God, but the believer possesses certainty about God's intention which he acquires from the Spirit's action within him.

The revivalist activity which Wesley sponsored relied heavily on the idea of the Spirit prompting men and, in the early years of Wesley's preaching, spirit possession in revival meetings was a commonplace. These phenomena in fact antedate Wesley: during the revival in Massachusetts in 1735-42, scenes of extreme emotional disturbance occurred which have-often been called outbursts of enthusiasm. The leader, Jonathan Edwards, favoured restraint in worship but, particularly under James Davenport's preaching, fainting, falling, shrieking and violent trembling were frequent accompaniments of religious conversion, as the Spirit acted on the mind of participants. These signs, indeed, became for some the testimony of the Spirit.

Although Wesley was more restrained than other revivalist preachers, in his early days he too tended to regard dramatic responses to his preaching as the action of the Holy Spirit. He recorded many cases of sensational effects, particularly on the more illiterate members of his congregations among the miners of Bristol and Newcastle. People fell raving and anguished at his meetings. Sometimes whole congregations broke down into spontaneous weeping and groaning; sometimes a man was struck down as if dead; some went blind; and between 1739 and 1742 there were 14 cases of temporary insanity and 9 incurable cases among members of Wesley's audiences. Later, when Wesley became convinced that these manifestations were not the operations of the Holy Spirit, and began to discourage them, they became much less common and subsequently disappeared from Methodism, although recurrences occurred among the Primitive Methodists under the preaching of Hugh Bourne.

Extreme manifestations of emotional disorder that were credited to the Holy Spirit were common during the Great Revival in Kentucky in 1797-1805. At the camp meetings at which the brothers John and William McGee and James McGready preached hellfire, outbreaks of jerks, falling and dancing occurred. Some even barked like dogs in the charged atmosphere, in which large numbers had brought home to them God's scheme of reward and punishment as seen by the Presbyterian and Methodist preachers who led the revival. Revivals in more settled societies have seldom produced such manifestations.

Strange phenomena were reported, however, such as the preaching sickness that swept over Sweden in the middle of the 19th century, when many people, including children, spoke fervently and eloquently as if possessed. In Finland, the incidence of 'sleeping preachers' – people who suddenly preached from a semi-somnolent state – was noted at various periods from the 1770s to the 1930s; these are well recorded and may be regarded as states of possession. The Welsh Revival in 1905 produced a large number of cases of 'speaking in tongues', visions and trance states.

Spiritual Wives

Wesley's doctrine that a man might obtain the assurance of salvation and be sanctified gave rise, particularly in the United States, to the strong emphasis among some Methodists on a condition of holiness. They taught that entire sanctification was possible as a 'second blessing' subsequent to, and distinct from, the experience of conversion. The Presbyterian revivalist Charles G. Finney espoused these doctrines in the hope that this emphasis on moral regeneration might consolidate the results of revival-induced conversions. But both revivalism and the doctrine of entire sanctification appeared as threats to the settled Church order, and increasingly those who advocated these ideas and practices found themselves somewhat at odds with ordinary denominational fellowships.

Emphasizing the possibility of attaining complete sanctity, sometimes as an instantaneous transformation, some of these people found themselves too holy to need ordinary church associations. Not all of those who believed that they had possessed the Holy Spirit in this way were drawn into this position, but at least some of them sought to demonstrate their spirituality by establishing that they could dispense with the normal conventions and restraints of society. As in the Middle Ages, it was in free sexual behaviour that they demonstrated their spiritual excellence.

Ecclesiastical regulation was rejected by these enthusiasts, as were the Scriptures. The real guides to conduct were experienced inwardly. In asserting their transcendence over the merely carnal, some of these votaries came to practise 'spiritual' unions of a promiscuous kind. 'Spiritual wivery' was one variant on this theme that held fascination for many of the Perfectionists, although not all of them justified promiscuity. Sometimes they simply believed in 'sanctified bundling'. The Perfectionist following at the Oneida Community of John Humphrey Noyes practised sexual communism, involving promiscuity, but they did so conscientiously and with restraint. Noyes was an advocate of a theory of planned parenthood, not of promiscuous sexuality (see COMMUNISTIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

Modern Enthusiasts

In modern Pentecostalism the revivalist tradition, which gave currency to the idea of the Holy Spirit momentarily affecting the hearts of men at the time of conversion, acquired an added dimension of enthusiasm rather different from that of Finney. In the first decade of the 20th century a number of evangelicals came to believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit (an occasion when the convert was dramatically filled with the Spirit) and the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues were still in operation. The Pentecostalists taught that not only might believers experience a sanctifying visit of the Holy Spirit, but that they might, after Holy Spirit baptism, continue to enjoy the opportunity to be a vessel for the Spirit's possession.

At first there was considerable disorder in religious meetings and the Spirit was credited with providing specific guidance for individuals and exhorting men to all sorts of activity; but eventually Pentecostalists re-invoked St Paul to provide a basis of order for their services. Today they assert that the Spirit never utters prophecy contrary to Holy Writ. But, both in theory and in the mood of their meetings, Pentecostalists are enthusiasts (see PENTACOSTALIST MOVMENT).

A distinction must be made between movements in which there is expectation that all men might possess or become the deity, and those in which the deity becomes the possession of only a priest or a medium, or is represented in one prophet or Messiah (see MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS).

In the phenomenon of Spiritualism there is a considerable element of enthusiasm. In the general Western tradition, stemming from the practice of the Fox sisters of Rochester, New York, in the mid-19th century, the medium is possessed not by the deity but by the spirit of a dead person. There is a tendency to regard this spirit as acting with the will of God even though it is not itself regarded as part of the deity. In the older tradition of Western Spiritualism, however, particularly as it was manifested by the Shakers (see SHAKERS), the spirits that prompted speaking in tongues, instructed in dancing, inspired the composition of particular hymns and conveyed messages and revelations, were seen as more characteristically emanations of the divine. In this the Shakers sustained the enthusiasm of the Camisards or French Prophets, whose refugees converted the first Shakers in the mid-18th century (see CAMISARDS).

Enthusiasm occurs in other contemporary movements, particularly those that are described as messianic, but the term covers a very wide range of religious persuasions. The imprecision of the term, and its application to any expressive religious phenomena, have caused it to fall out of currency in contemporary sociological studies of religion, although it is still employed by orthodox religionists themselves – usually as a term of disparagement.

BRYAN R. WILSON

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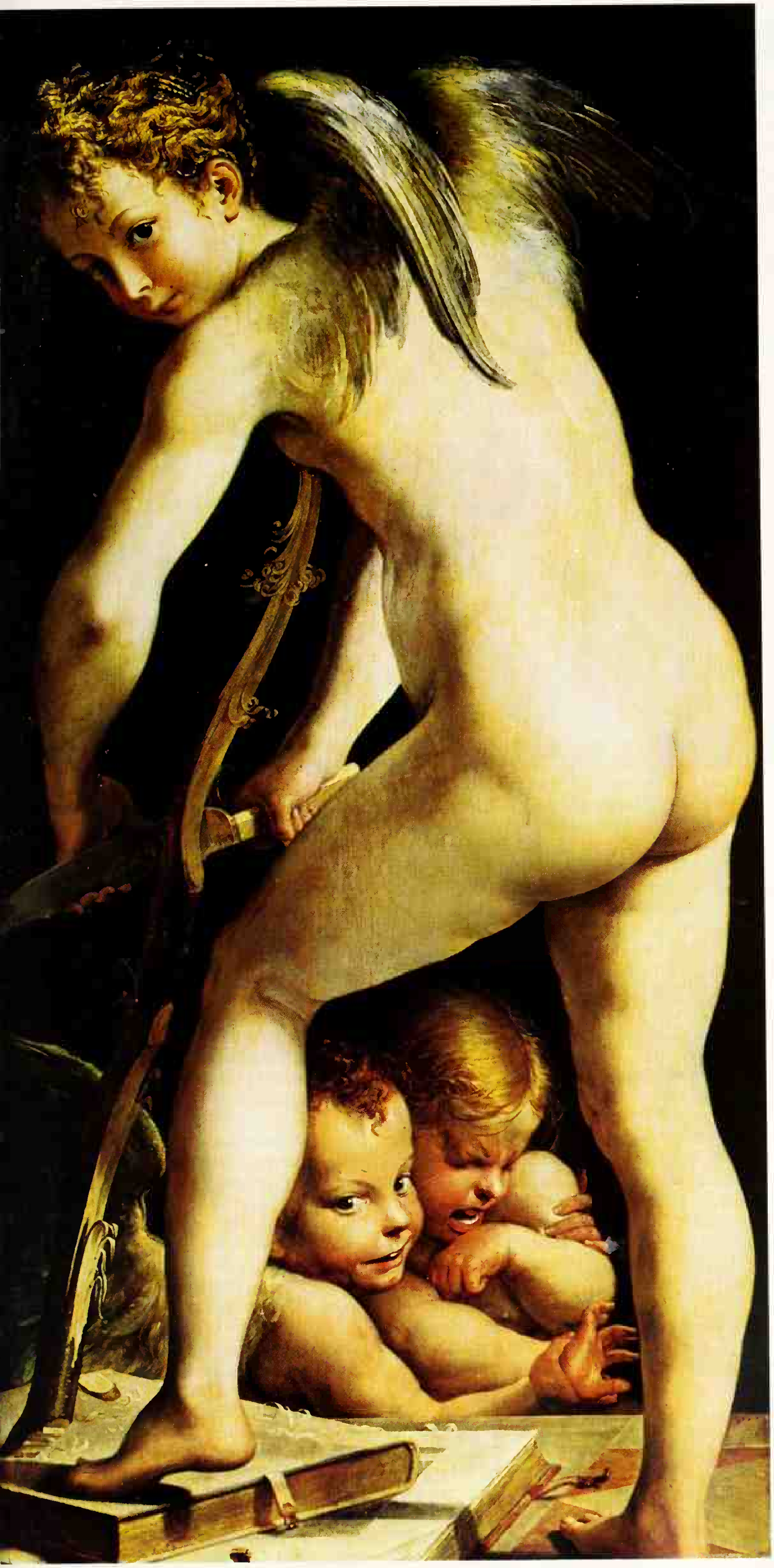


Parmigianino's painting of Eros shaping his bow. The 'bitter-sweet' often mischievous god of love is winged to represent the fleeting nature of passion and with his arrows he can inspire both love and aversion

Meyer Erwin

Originally the god of love was not the pretty boy archer of popular tradition but an all-powerful force which inspired fear in the hearts of gods and men

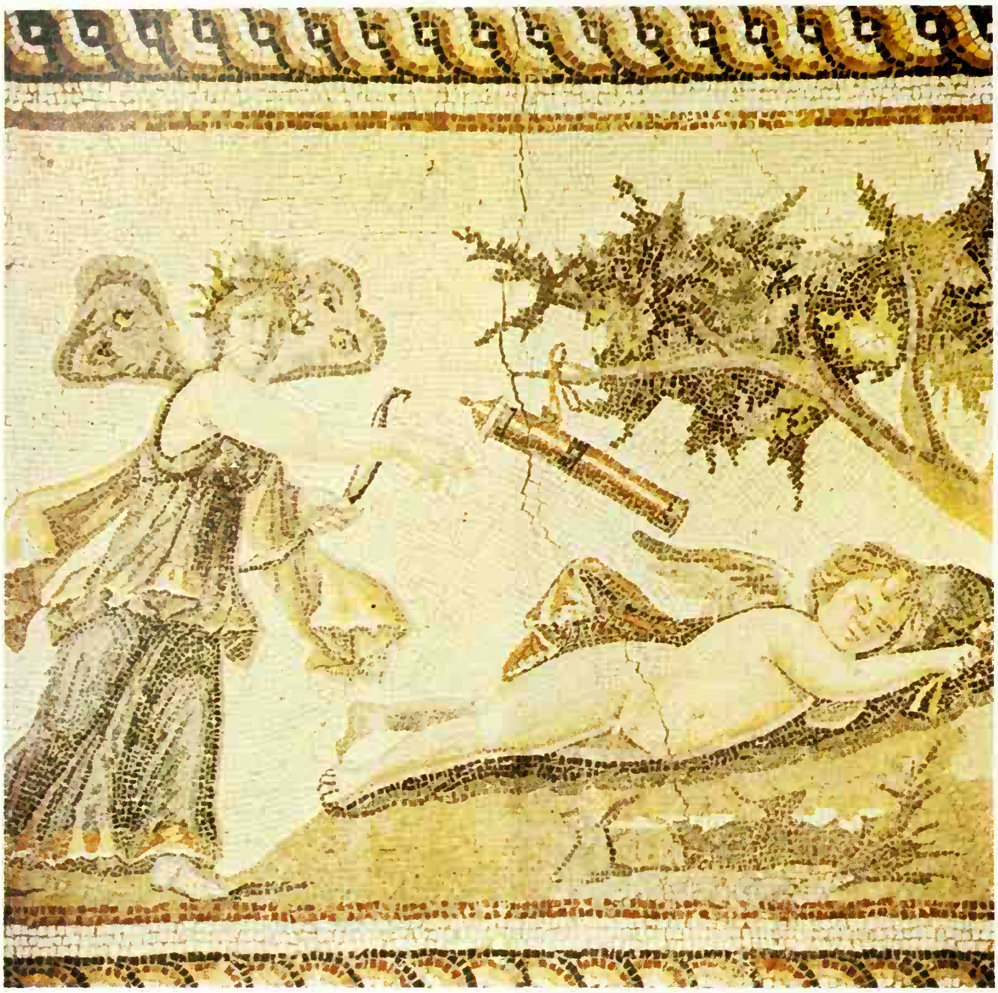
EROS

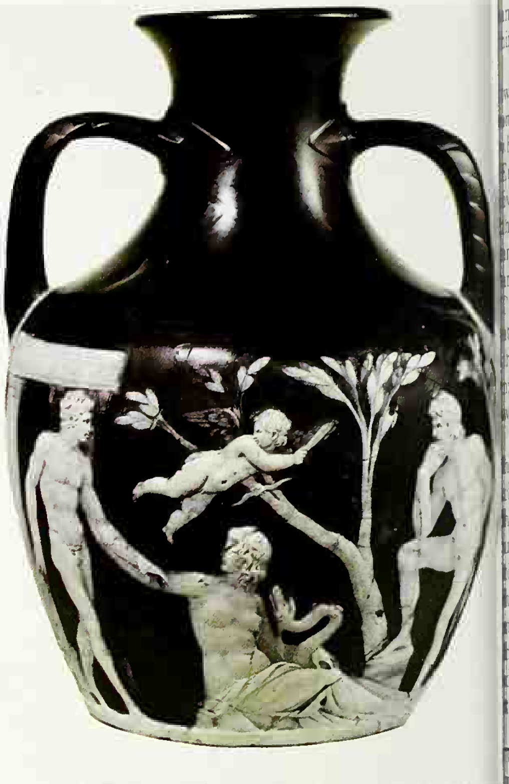
THE CHUBBY CHERUB with his bow and quiver, favourite device of Victorian valentines and rococo art, bears little resemblance to the earliest conceptions of Eros, the Greek god of love. His origins are obscure; some say that he was hatched from a silver egg laid in the womb of darkness, emerging as a monstrous being, four-headed, golden-winged and uttering animal cries. Others hold that he was the son of Iris or of Ilithyia, the goddess of childbirth; while later mythology makes him the son of Aphrodite by Zeus, her father, or by Ares, the god of war, or by Hermes. The Greek writer Hesiod (8th century BC) makes Eros, together with Earth and Tartarus, the oldest of the gods. He represents him as the powerful creative force that attracts together and unites the cosmic couples who created the universe, 'bringing harmony to chaos' and making it possible for life to develop (see APHRODITE).

Long before Aphrodite appeared among the gods, the ancient Greeks worshipped a god of sexual potency named Eros. That Eros was not only a creative agent but also on occasions a destructive one was already understood: an implicit acceptance of the power of passion to wreck society and threaten law and order. The Latin writer Apuleius (2nd century AD) in later times makes the same point when he speaks of the god 'running from building to building all night long with his torch and his arrows, breaking up respectable homes.' But it is as a cosmic principle that Eros first makes his appearance in Greek myth, a far cry from the petulant boy archer of later tradition.

Although there is no mention of the god in Homer, the passages in which the word *eros* occur illustrate clearly its early meaning. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* eros stands for irresistible physical desire; it is the force which attracts Zeus to Hera, Paris to Helen, an affliction which causes the limbs of Penelope's suitors to tremble uncontrollably. In the later lyric poets of the 6th and 7th centuries BC the conception of this force is broadened to include mind as well as body.

From his birth, Eros's variously imputed parentage signifies several different aspects of his role as the god of passionate love. As the son of Hermes, god of fertility, who was worshipped with phallic images, Eros represents sexual potency and is himself a god of fertility: at his cult centre at Thespiae in Boeotia he was represented by a simple phallic figure. From the devious god Hermes, too, he draws his cunning and his penchant for trickery. With Ares the warrior for his father, Eros reminds us of the fighting man's


Sonia Halliday



Above **Eros presides over a tender scene in which Thetis is reunited with her husband Peleus: detail from the Portland Vase, now in the British Museum *Left* The story of Cupid and Psyche, suggesting the union between the human soul and divine love, was a popular subject with artists: 4th century mosaic from Antioch Museum**

immemorial attraction for women and the often ambivalent – or, as we would say, 'love-hate' – nature of sexual relationships. As the son of Aphrodite by Zeus, according to Hesiod and the most widely held view, the contrary and perverse element of Eros is symbolized; his parents' union is an incestuous one, signifying that erotic love knows no boundaries and trespasses on forbidden relationships.

God Who Never Grew Up

The changing conception of the god is reflected in art, in which Eros remains perpetually youthful, even growing steadily younger. He is represented as a youth in archaic times, as a young boy in the Classical period and as a baby boy in the Hellenistic age. He is shown winged to represent the fleeting nature of passion, blindfolded to suggest the inconsequence and unpredictability of his attacks, and carrying a torch to symbolize the flame which he kindles in others. He has power over gods and men – even Zeus himself is frightened of him – and no one is immune to his cruel darts.

Indulged by Aphrodite, he is half god, half spoilt, undisciplined boy. His bow and arrows, first mentioned by Euripides (484–407 BC), are his favourite playthings; the sharp arrows from his quiver producing sometimes love and sometimes disdain in their victims. He takes a malicious pleasure in choosing unlikely targets and delights in the misery he causes. Sometimes Aphrodite, who herself suffers from his archery and is led into all sorts of undignified liaisons in consequence, loses patience with him and confiscates his weapons. The poet Anacreon (6th century BC), while dwelling on Eros's playful side refers also to his cruelty. The god is shown (as also on vase paintings) striking the lovelorn with an axe or wielding a whip. At the same time Eros is the embodiment of the sweetness of youth. He is associated with all beautiful things, he walks on a carpet of flowers and wears a crown of roses. Yet it is not for nothing that the rose is his special emblem, for the rose, though sweetly perfumed, has a sharp thorn. The poet Sappho describes his contradictory qualities as 'bitter sweet'.

The playmates of the god in Aphrodite's train are Pothos and Himeros, representing longing and desire. Eros has a brother, the son of Ares and Aphrodite, named Anteros. Earlier writers show Anteros in opposition to Eros, as the god who avenges slighted love; it is only later that he becomes the brother of Eros, standing for mutual affection and tenderness, yet still constantly at odds with the selfish god of love. Anteros was the younger brother and was conceived on the advice of Themis, Zeus's first wife, when Aphrodite complained to her that Eros remained perpetually a child and never seemed to grow any older. Themis suggested that the remedy was for Eros to have a brother, who would spur him on to outstrip him. As soon as Anteros was born Eros grew stronger and the span of his wings increased. If ever he was separated from Anteros, however, he found himself reduced to his former size. The story seems to suggest that passion that is mutual rather than one-sided makes love grow stronger and more mature.

There was not one Eros but many, according to Euripides and a number of later writers, and he was worshipped in many places: notably in Parion in Mysia and in Thespiae with phallic images, as the god of both passion and fertility. A festival in his honour, the *Erotidia*, was celebrated at Thespiae in the spring, every fifth year, with sports and games in which musicians and others took part. If any strife or sedition had arisen among the people, prayers and sacrifices would be offered to the god to resolve the disagreement.

Cupid, That Very Wicked Boy

Known to the Romans as Cupido or Amor, the Latin counterpart of Eros has strongly marked human characteristics, due to the influence of the Alexandrian poets and artists. He is less of a god and more of a mischievous child: he is the 'knavish lad' referred to by Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), 'this wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy'. The word *cupido* means desire but it is an emotion on a different scale from Hesiod's power 'that loosens the limbs and damages the mind.' Apuleius describes him as 'that very wicked boy, with neither manners nor respect for the decencies.' In earlier times, however, he was a more powerful god, accorded the same honour as his mother. It was believed that his influence extended not only over the heavens and the sea but even to the underworld. His godhead was widely venerated nd prayers and sacrifices were offered to m daily.

According to some authorities, there were vo Cupids, one of whom, the son of Jupiter nd Venus, was a lively and pleasant youth, hile the other, the offspring of Night and rebus, was given to debauchery and riotous ving. Cicero indeed mentions three Cupids, eir parentage being ascribed to Mercury nd Diana, Mercury and Venus, and Mars nd Venus. In common with other immortals, upid had the power of changing his shape will: in the *Aeneid* of Virgil, he assumed e form of Ascanius at the request of his other Venus and went to the court of Dido, here he inspired the queen with love.

In art, Cupid is usually shown amusing imself with some childish pursuit. He hases a butterfly, plays with dice, drives a oop or throws a quoit. Sometimes he plays pon a horn to entertain his mother; some- mes he marches like a warrior, a spear on is shoulder and a buckler on his arm, sig- ifying that love conquers all. Occasionally e is shown riding on the back of a lion or a lphin, or engaged in breaking up the hunderbolts of Jupiter.

he Taming of Love

ike Eros, Cupid is vain and cruel, and he Latin poet Ovid speaks of his 'savage bite'. A story in his *Metamorphoses* illus- rates the vindictive side of the god of love. upid's arrows, he explains, were of two inds: one golden, shining and sharp, the ther leaden and blunt. The first inspired the ictim with love and the second produced ear and repulsion. Once Phoebus Apollo eased Cupid for carrying weapons which ere better suited to a warrior than a aughty boy. Determined to get his own back n Apollo, Cupid shot an arrow of desire at is tormentor, who promptly fell in love with he nymph Daphne – only to be repulsed, or Cupid had wounded her too, but with a eaden arrow. Refusing Apollo's advances, he fled terrified, but the god pursued her elentlessly. Finally she implored her ather Peneus to efface her beauty by turning her into a tree to escape the god.

It is in the legend of Cupid and Psyche, as old by Apuleius that the god of love is shown t his most tender and human. For once he is nade to experience the suffering which he as inflicted on others. Psyche is an earthly naiden of such extraordinary beauty that she arouses the jealousy of Venus, who orders Cupid to cause her to fall in love with the vilest and most degraded of men. Cupid, however, himself falls in love with her and has her carried off to a marvellous palace, where he visits her nightly in darkness but conceals his identity from her and tells her that she must never see his face. Lonely during the daytime, Psyche begs to be allowed to invite her sisters and Cupid agrees, though warning her that they will try to set her against him. Out of jealousy at her wealth and good fortune, the sisters persuade her that her husband must be a repulsive monster since he will never permit his face to be seen.

The following night, when the god is asleep, she lights a lamp to look at him. Instead of a horrible serpent, as her sisters had described, she sees a beautiful youth, winged and golden haired. In her ecstasy, she lets fall a drop of scalding oil on his shoulder. Cupid awakes and tells her that for her disobedience she will never see him again. Psyche searches the earth for Cupid, hounded relentlessly by Venus, who has discovered the lovers' secret and has locked up Cupid in his bedroom. Cupid, unable to bear separation from Psyche, flies out of the window to enlist the aid of Jupiter, who puts an end to their troubles by raising Psyche to the level of the gods and making her immortal. Venus is reconciled and accepts Psyche as her daughter-in-law and the lovers are reunited.

Psyche is held to be the personification of the human soul and is often shown in art winged, like her lover, following an ancient belief that the human soul took the form of a butterfly or other winged insect. In Platonic philosophy love, in the most elevated sense, is an agent of the soul's progress and from the 4th century BC Psyche and the god of love were often depicted together in allegorical representations.

ISABEL SUTHERLAND

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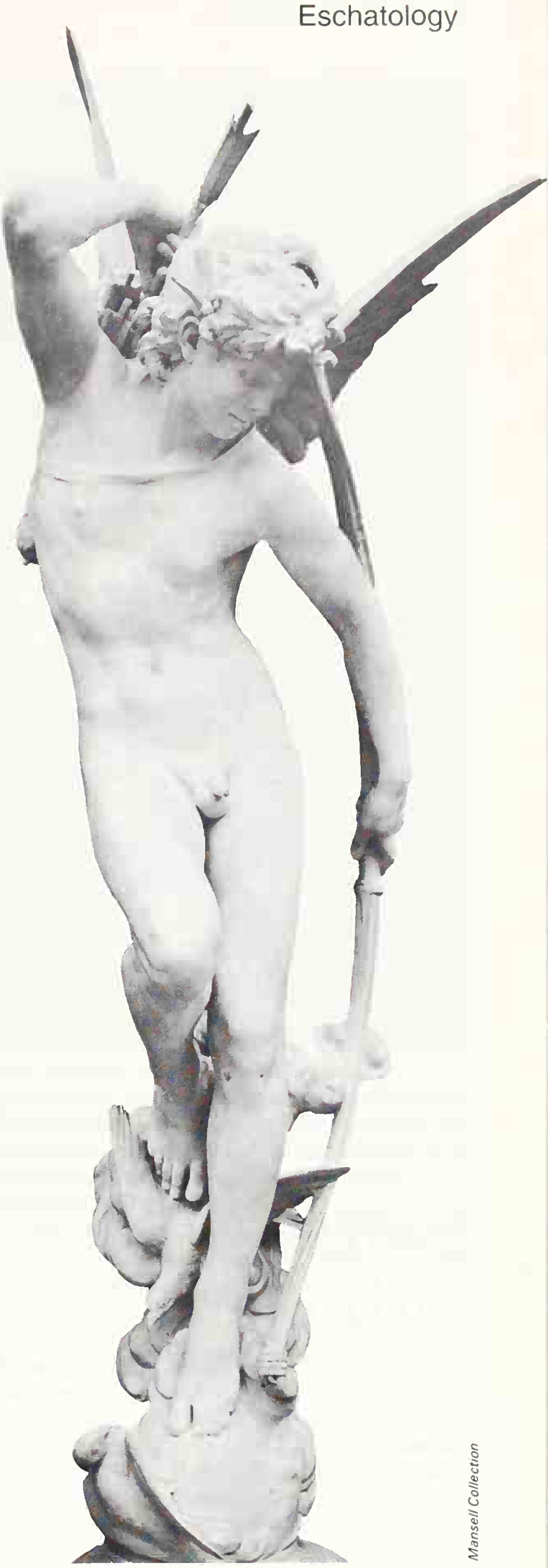


The aspect of Eros as the unifying power of love which brings order, peace and development, has encouraged municipal statues of the god in European art: marble of Eros in the Palais de Luxembourg, Paris

Mansell Collection

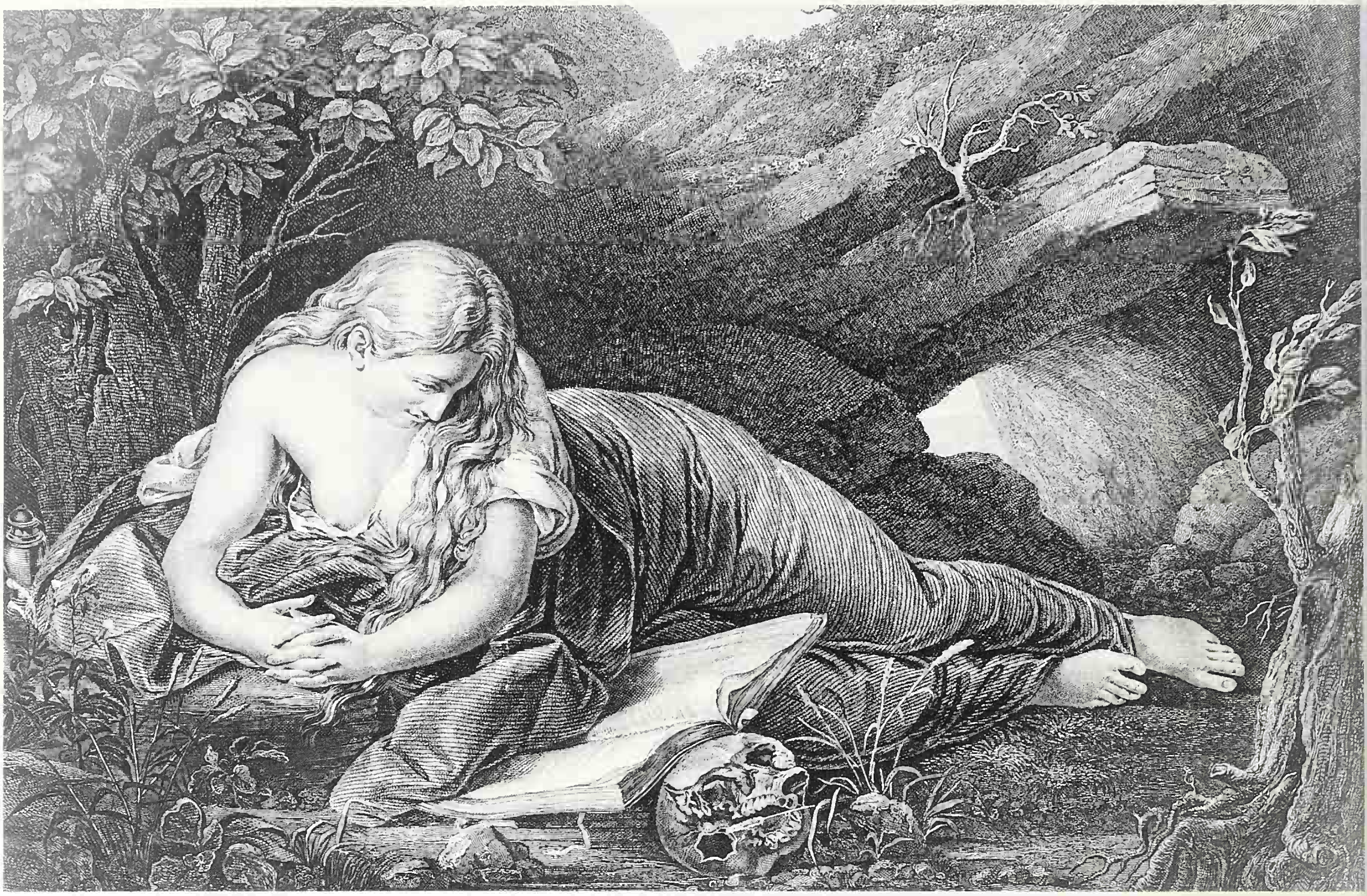
salen Institute

ounded in 1962 in Big Sur, alifornia, as residential centre for numanistic' psychology promulated by anti-Freudian Abraham Iaslow and Gestalt therapy develped by Fritz Perls; also active in ioneering 'encounter' groups.

Eschatology

The doctrine of last things, involving speculation about the ultimate destiny of man and the world, and the nature of death, judgement, heaven and hell: Hindus believe that the individual soul is absorbed into the Divine Being after a series of reincarnations: according to Christian apocalyptic writings the end of the world will be marked by the return of Christ to overthrow the Antichrist and to preside at the Last Judgement.

See END OF THE WORLD; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.



The urge to find secret teachings and a secret history concealed behind the orthodox account of early Christianity has been a feature of occult and New Age speculation since the 19th century

ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY

THE RENAISSANCE of interest in occultism in the 19th century carried with it a renewed enthusiasm for the spiritual wisdom of the classical world. This was accompanied by dissatisfaction with orthodox Christianity, and the result was a drive to discover an 'esoteric Christianity' – regarded as a secret teaching known only to the inner circles of Christian initiates in the early days and carefully hidden from the mass of ordinary ignorant converts. A promising place to go mining for esoteric Christianity was in the Christian gnostic texts and the Hermetica, produced by groups denounced as heretical by mainstream Christian thinkers (see GNOSTICISM; HERMETICA).

The Gnostic Revelation

The key figure in the search was the eccentric and formidable Anna Bonus Kingsford (1846-88). The wife of a Shropshire clergyman, she was a fierce campaigner against vivisection and took lessons in magic so as to be able to murder leading vivisectionists by sorcery. She claimed two successful killings, though regretting her failure to dispose of the great French scientist Louis Pasteur (who outlived her, as it turned out). She suffered from constant ill-health, for which she took copious quantities of chloroform, which gave her vivid dreams. On a visit to Paris for medical training to help her anti-vivisection work, spirits began to speak through her mouth.

Besides urgently demanding ample and continuing supplies of chloroform, the spirits revealed teachings in which Anna Kingsford and her devoted companion Edward Maitland recognised 'the spiritual alchemy' of the gnostic and Hermetic teaching of the early Christian world, as well as the wisdom of the Neoplatonist philosophers and the Muslim Sufis. The teachings showed that the true, inner Christianity, far from ousting pagan religion, had adopted the secret wisdom of the ancients, handed down generation by generation since time immemorial.

This enticing revelation was taken up with enthusiasm by some of Eliphas Lévi's disciples in France. It also had a strong appeal to the Theosophists, who were convinced that all the world's great religions were fundamentally the same. Returning to England, Anna Kingsford and Maitland founded the Hermetic Society, which in the 1880s was in close contact with Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophists, and also with the leaders of the Order of the Golden Dawn (see BLAVATSKY; GOLDEN DAWN).

After Anna Kingsford's early death, Maitland founded a short-lived Esoteric Christian Union in 1891, but it was the Theosophists who carried the torch. In 1905 Annie Besant, the leading figure in the Theosophical movement after Madame Blavatsky's death (see BESANT), published her book *Esoteric Christianity*. Her purpose was to throw some light on 'the deep truths underlying Christianity, truths generally overlooked, and only too often denied'.

Meanwhile, various Gnostic Churches were founded in France, and in England G.R.S.Mead (1863-1933), who had been Madame Blavatsky's secretary, published English translations of gnostic and Hermetic texts. On a far more popular level, Edouard Schuré's book *The Great Initiates*, which came out in 1889 and was reprinted in innumerable editions for years afterwards, disseminated belief in the fundamental similarity of the teachings of all the major religions and their founders, and suggested that Jesus of Nazareth had been trained by the unorthodox Jewish sect of the Essenes and was subsequently initiated into the mysteries of Ancient Egypt.

The Nag Hammadi Texts

Far and away the most influential figure in transmitting gnostic ideas and influences to New Age speculation was C.G.Jung (see JUNG), who liked to wear a gnostic ring on his finger and wrote one of his early books under the pseudonym of a Christian gnostic philosopher, Basilides, who taught at Alexandria in the 2nd century AD. Basilides maintained that Jesus was not crucified, his place on the cross having been taken by Simon of Cyrene (who in the orthodox tradition merely helped to carry the cross).

An important discovery came in 1945, when 13 papyrus codices, bound in leather and containing some 50 gnostic documents, were found near the village of Nag Hammadi in Egypt, on the bank of the Nile. They had been hidden in a jar and the finder had begun to use them to light his fire at home, but fortunately the bulk of them were saved. This rich haul of texts, copies of earlier originals, included the Coptic 'Gospel of Thomas', which claimed to contain 'the secret words that the living Jesus spake' and promised immortality to those who could rightly interpret its teaching. There were also the 'Gospel of the Egyptians' and the 'Gospel of Truth', as well as astrological and philosophical treatises, and works on magic. Their importance was that the teachings of the gnostics had previously been seen largely through the eyes of their Christian opponents.

One of the texts repeated the belief that Jesus did not die on the cross, and another, the 'Gospel of Philip', referred to Jesus loving Mary Magdalene (a reformed prostitute in the orthodox tradition) better than the other disciples and often kissing her on the mouth. A text called 'Thunder, Perfect Mind', exalted the feminine principle as both whore and holy one, wife and virgin – a message to be taken up before long.

The Qumran Scrolls

The Nag Hammadi texts did not get into English until the 1970s. For the moment, far more excitement was aroused by another discovery of ancient texts, when the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in a cave in the Qumran district of Palestine in 1947. More scrolls came to light in the following years. Schuré's suggestion about Jesus and the Essenes was brought to life again, as speculation played around early reports which connected the scrolls with the sect and suggested that their 'Teacher of Righteousness' was either Jesus himself or John the Baptist.

More recently he has been dubiously identified with James, the brother of Jesus and the leader of Jesus's earliest followers, whose Christianity was quite different from that of St Paul and other New Testament writers. The fact that the scholars working on the scrolls have been mostly Roman Catholics, and remarkably slow to publish and translate them, has fuelled suspicions of a cover-up of revelations about the early Christians which would injure mainline Christianity (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS).

Jesus and Mary Magdalene

All this was grist to the mill of what was now quite a strong popular appetite to be told of secret teachings at variance with orthodox Christianity. Interest also mounted in heretical Christian sects of the Middle Ages who were strongly influenced by gnostic ideas – the Bogomils in the Balkans and the Cathars, against whom the Church waged a bitter crusade in the south of France in the 13th century (see BOGOMILS; CATHARS). At the same time, feminist critics began to assail orthodox Christianity as a repugnantly patriarchal creed, while feminist Christians looked to find and emphasise (or preferably rediscover and re-emphasise) a feminine component in the Christian idea of the divine.

All these needs seemed to be met when a 'secret' history of Christianity was provided in a 1982 best-seller entitled (in the US) *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Following the lead from Nag Hammadi, the authors proposed that Jesus might not have died on the cross and that he might have married or had a liaison with Mary Magdalene. This union might have produced children, from whom the royal line of the Merovingian kings of France might have been descended. The plot was tricked out with the Holy Grail, Cathar treasure and the Knights Templar to create a satisfying blend of mystery.

Much the most interesting aspect of the book is the welcome it received. The idea of Jesus having sex with Mary Magdalene delighted iconoclasts and permissives. Martin Scorsese brought it to the screen in *The Last Temptation of Christ* and others soon climbed on the bandwagon. In 1991 the Portuguese author José Saramago, in a much-vilified, highly publicized novel, had Jesus making love to Mary Magdalene, rejecting the Virgin Mary and the rest of his family and deciding not to raise Lazarus from the dead. A year later the press carried excited reports of *Jesus the Man*, a book by an Australian academic, Barbara Thiering, claiming that Jesus did not die on the cross, but married Mary Magdalene and had three children, and married again after she left him – all supposed to be based on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scholars dismissed it as nonsense, but esoteric Christianity was once again news.

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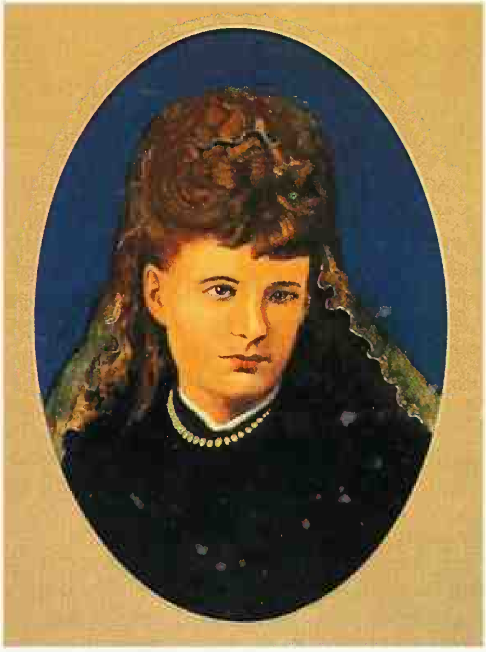

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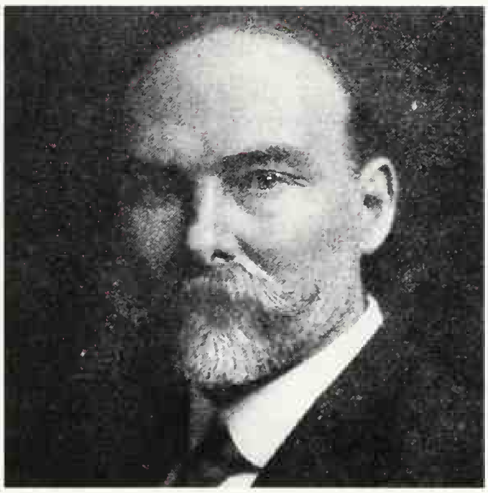


Fortean Picture Library

Left **G.R.S.Mead, translater of gnostic texts and *(above)* Anna Kingsford: a contemporary hand-coloured miniature *Facing page* Early 19th-century engraving of Mary Magdalene, seen already as a symbol of emancipated woman**

Essenes

A small pre-Christian sect, many of whose members retired in isolation to caves on the banks of the Dead Sea to await the triumph of God over the powers of darkness; they have been identified with the community at Qumran which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls; through a life of simplicity and mysticism, devoted to the love of God, virtue and man, they aspired to the perfection which would initiate them into the mysteries of God.

See DEAD SEA SCROLLS.

ETERNAL RETURN

THE PROBLEM of the interpretation of history and understanding man's remote past are questions which have greatly fascinated the mind of modern man. The West has long been aware of these issues, but they came into sharp focus in the middle of the 19th century, when the doctrine of evolution undertook to explain the entire course of history from its distant origins to the present day in terms of a continuous and on the whole steady development. But despite the value of the evolutionary theory to the biological and geological sciences, it raised certain questions in the realm of the spirit which it was incapable of answering. It failed altogether to provide more than a temporary justification for the temporal process; in other words, it could not explain satisfactorily what was the ultimate *meaning* of history. And it was only able to speculate on the modes of thought of our ancestors.

Theories of origins – the origin of society, of religion, of mythology and many more – flourished; but almost without exception, they attributed modern attitudes to the past. It was assumed that the thought processes of 'primitive' man must be accessible to the investigator, and this assumption gave rise to considerable speculation concerning the nature of 'primitive mentality'; but in the absence of all but the most ambiguous evidence, such theories were never far removed from sheer guesswork.

Among the most recent, and the most consistently worked out, of these theories is that put forward by the Rumanian historian of religion Mircea Eliade in his book *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (1949) since published in English as *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*. In it, he undertakes both to offer an explanation of the workings of the mind of primitive man and to account for the essential differences between that and the mind of 'modern' man in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Briefly, Eliade's thesis is that primitive or archaic man was afraid of the passage of time, and sought to annul history by a repeated return to a mythical past (the 'eternal return'); Judaeo-Christian man, on the other hand, recognizes God at work within history, and can thus accept his historical existence and his own place in history without fear. In Eliade's own words: 'The chief difference between the man of the archaic and traditional societies and the man of the modern societies with their strong imprint of Judaeo-Christianity lies in the fact that the former feels himself indissolubly connected with the Cosmos and the cosmic rhythms, whereas the latter insists that he is connected only with History.'

No one can approach primitive religions, or study them on even the most superficial level, without being made aware of the importance to their structure of cycles of time – the recurrence of day and night, the progression of the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the reproductive cycles of human beings, animals and plants. In the widest sense this may be seen as the eternal struggle between life and death, light and darkness, fertility and barrenness, chaos and cosmos. Just as creation itself is believed to have been a conquest of chaos so each new fertile season and each new beginning is seen as a repetition of the same creative act.

Eliade maintains that this is the pattern which alone made life tolerable for archaic man. Eternal return is thus defined as 'the cyclical recurrence of what has been before' – and what has 'been before' is the creative act. Primitive man, Eliade holds, believes that 'everything begins over again at its commencement every instant. The past is but a prefiguration of the future. No event is irreversible and no transformation is final.' So the beginning of a new year for instance, is looked upon, not as something utterly and completely new, but as a repetition of what has already been.

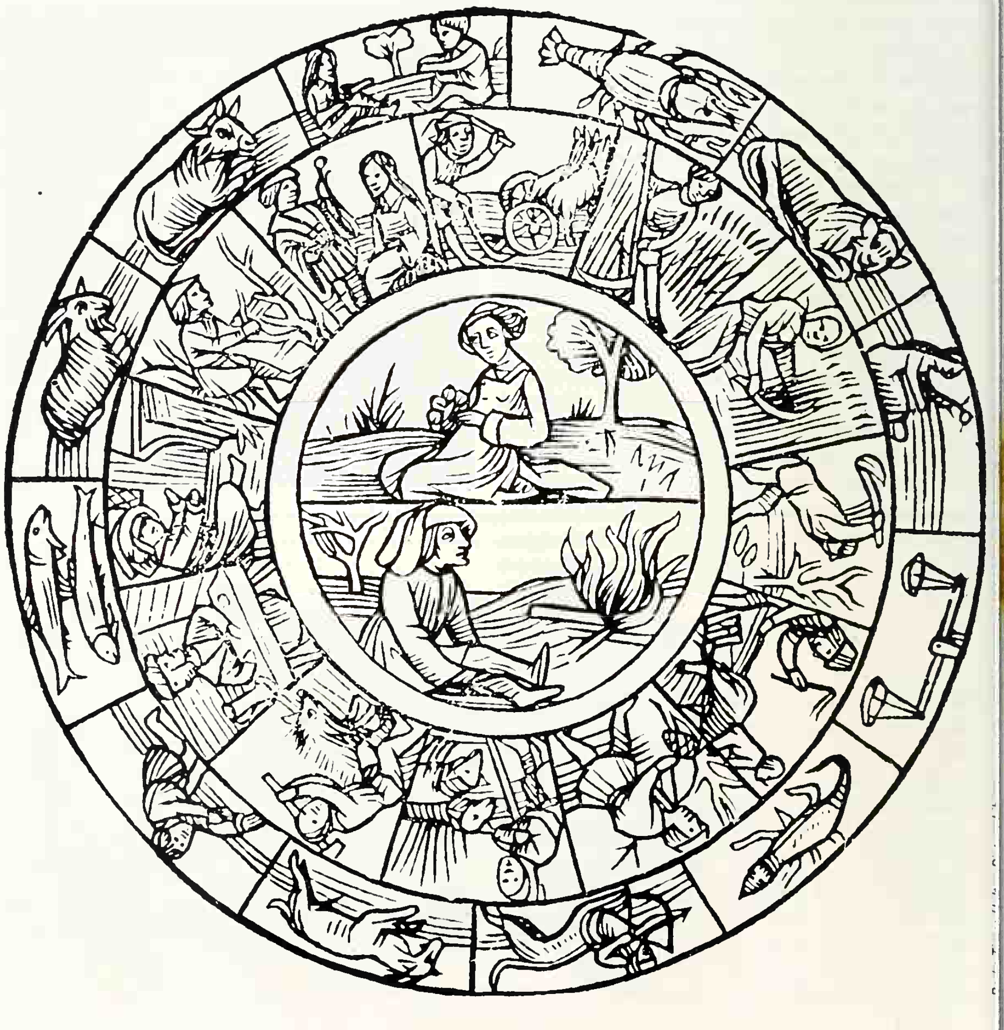
In Ancient Mesopotamia, the recitation of the epic of creation, *Enuma elish*, at the New Year (*Akitu*) Festival, with its attendant ceremonies of atonement and regeneration, brings about the effective creation of another solar cycle. First chaos is temporarily re-established, as the king is deprived of his symbols of office; but then the creation of the world is re-enacted: the fates are cast for the subsequent 12 months, and finally the fertility of the land, man and beast is symbolically ensured by an act of hierogamy – ritual intercourse – between the king and a priestess.

The problem of pain and suffering is, in a sense, solved by this view of life. In archaic societies, pain, suffering and death are always believed to be caused; they never just happen. The Hindu doctrine of *karma* provides one possible explanation: suffering is brought about by moral and ritual lapses in a previous cycle of existence. Elsewhere the suffering of a god or goddess may be postulated, and this, too, provides a consolation, since the sufferer knows that his unhappiness is shared. Again, the suffering of the deity is seen within the framework of the repetitive, cyclical pattern of the eternal return. The typical vegetation deity of agricultural societies suffers and dies as the vegetation withers and dies at the onset of winter or the dry season, or, in a lunar-orientated setting, as the moon wanes.

Banishing the Terror of Time

Cyclical time is sacred time. The cyclical pattern is that pattern in which the *passage* of time is minimized, and in which man feels at one with Nature. The knowledge that the cosmos in which he lives periodically 'dies' and is renewed enables him to accept the troubles of life with equanimity, because no distress is other than transitory, and death is inevitably followed by resurrection. The mystery religions of the ancient Mediterranean world offered precisely this – assimilation by initiation to gods and goddesses (Isis, Osiris, Demeter, Persephone, Orpheus and many more) who themselves shared in the earth's universal pattern of death and resurrection (see DYING GOD).

The mysteries, therefore, satisfied a profound need – the need for security in the face of the changes and chances of mortal life. They abolished 'the terror of history'



Eliade's term) by offering an escape from he present moment into a timeless mytholoical past, in other words, by an 'eternal eturn' into myth.

The situation of modern man is very diferent. Judaism and Christianity postulated linear view of time, in which the cosmos reated by God pursues its course to the umming up of all things, and the destrucion of the temporal order, by the same God. 'or centuries, this view was as it were supernposed on the cyclical view of the common eople, and was scarcely accepted; but the ew view of history which emerged in the Vest in the 18th and 19th centuries taught nan to look to the future, and not to the past, or his fulfilment. Cyclical theories of time ave way to the ideas of progress, developnent and evolution. Every event came to be egarded as unique, irreversible and, at least n Christian theology, as a new manifestaion of the will of God. Consequently, Western man came to concentrate as never before on capturing the essence of the irreversible instant: turned to the past, this means the obsessive writing of history and the cult of primary source; turned to the present, it means one or other form of existentialism; turned to the future, it means the spinning of utopian dreams or the prediction of catastrophe (the twin myths of science fiction). What modern man seems unable to do is to retreat from history into a timeless world of universal myth.

Man the myth-maker, deprived in the West of access to the myths that told of the time in the beginning when the world was shaped by the gods, makes myths out of film stars, pop singers and football players. Regrettably, whatever they may give him, immortality is not theirs to give.

Subconscious Level of Myth

Does the myth of the eternal return enable us to understand the mind of primitive or archaic man? And does it offer any explanation of the meaning of history? In a sense, the answers which one is prepared to return to such questions as these are as subject to intuition as they are to logic. The cyclical view of time which the myth of the eternal return presupposes is an incontestable fact of human experience. But does the evident fact that primitive man lives close to Nature necessarily mean that he *chooses* to identify himself with it? This is certainly Eliade's view. Concerning archaic man he writes that 'placed between accepting the historical condition and its risks on the one hand, and his reidentification with the modes of Nature on the other, he would choose such a reidentification.' It is the word 'choose' which rings a little false in this context, since it assumes that archaic man has the data on which a choice may be based, and that it is a conscious process.

Neither case seems to be proven. In fact, what the myth of the eternal return is offering us is a modern Western understanding of archaic man; whether archaic man would recognize himself in what is being said about him must be – and remains – an open question. True, this is what he seems to be doing: he seems to be living in a continual present; he seems to the sophisticated Westerner to be refusing 'to accept himself as a concrete being'. But a measure of agnosticism is never out of place when attempting to describe the remote and the exotic, and it is perhaps of more value, in the long run, to describe what can still be observed of the practices of primitives than to indulge in too much speculation about the mental processes that have given rise to them.

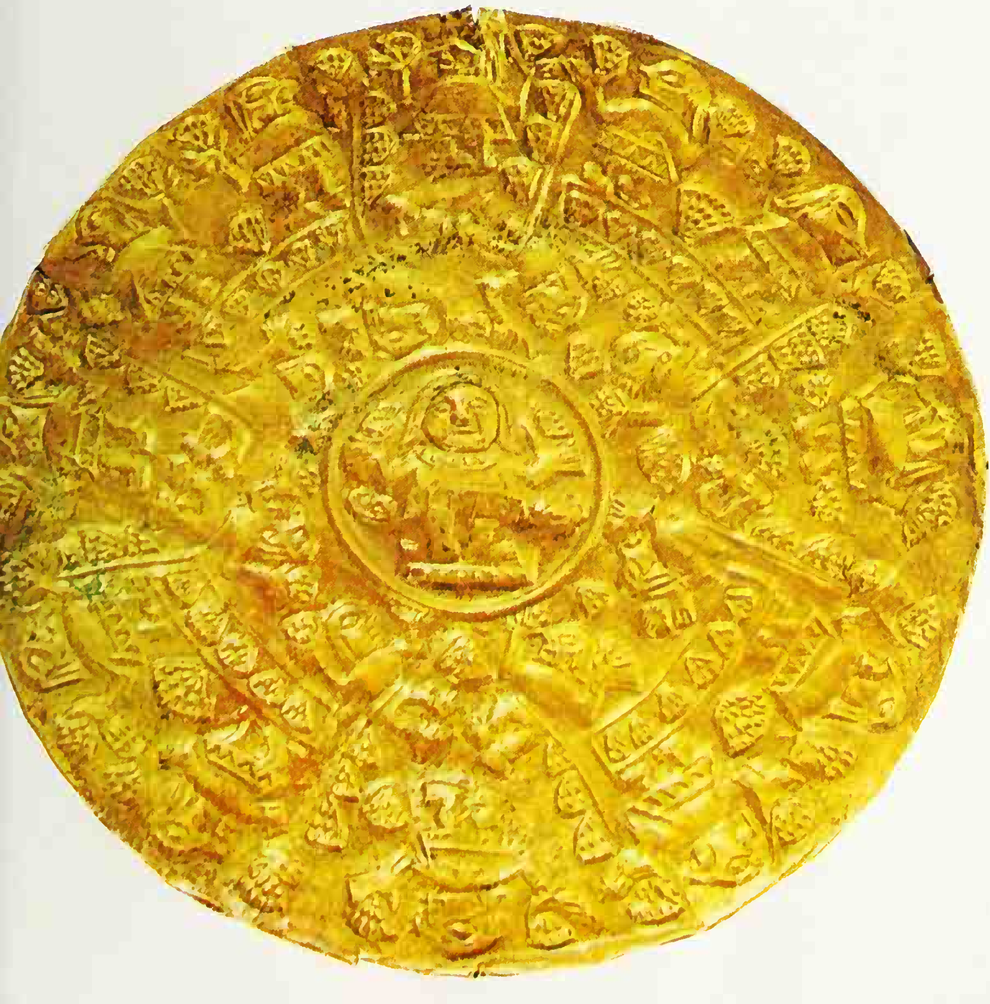
One must learn to discriminate. It is certainly a fallacy that all men of ancient cultures are to be judged by identical criteria. By the standard of pure antiquity, the cultures of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia are 'primitive' and 'archaic'. But both were writing cultures, and both knew the value of chronicles. As Professor S. G. F. Brandon has pointed out in his book *History, Time and Deity*, the Egyptian and Mesopotamian evidence can be interpreted in quite a different way from that proposed by Eliade. These early civilizations were far from being indifferent to history, much less afraid of it; kings and commoners alike sought to perpetuate the memory of their achievements, in dynastic lists, commemorative inscriptions (in the most durable of materials), portraits and autobiographical funerary texts, recording not only names but deeds. As Brandon writes, 'Such records of the past clearly attest a belief in the unique and definitive nature of the events thus commemorated, as well as the conviction that the memory of them was worth preserving.'

Perhaps we might conclude that in any civilization, except perhaps that of India, we are confronted by a superstructure of intellectual acceptance of history on the part of an effective minority; but that in practically all cases there is a vast and amorphous substructure in which instinct and tradition take precedence over reason. The myth of the eternal return works largely on this subconscious level, on the level at which instinct affirms the myths and archetypes. It is the critical Western mind which asks the leading questions, and disturbs the age-old patterns.

ERIC J. SHARPE

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *History, Time and Deity* (Manchester University Press, 1965); Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Harper and Row Torchbooks, New York, 1959).

eft Medieval astrological calendar showing, n the centre, the dual aspects of eternal eturn; fertility and spring, a pregnant irl, and regeneration, an old woman before fire, the element which renews itself rom its own ashes. Circular to represent ontinuity and the cyclical repetition of ife, it also contains the signs of the odiac and activities associated with different imes of the year _Right_ 12th-13th century old plate from Peru; the earth goddess is urrounded by the fruits of the harvest and he sections around the rim of the plate epresent the sowing calendar



Michael Holford

ETHIOPIA

Magical beliefs and practices are still wide-pread in Ethiopia, despite this country's ancient Christian tradition

WHILE ETHIOPIA STRUGGLES to pull herself into the present century, her large non-rban population clings to traditional man-ners and ancient beliefs. The nation is made p of a wide variety of peoples, faiths and ultures: it was dominated for centuries by he Monophysite Church (which believes in he single nature of the incarnate Christ) to which the Emperor and most of the ruling lass owed allegiance before the overthrow f Haile Selassie and the old regime in 1974. Many have commented on the almost Biblical stamp of Ethiopian Christian prac-ice and have marvelled at the remnants of ld pagan beliefs which lurk just below the urface. Since the coup of 1974 and the proclamation of a socialist republic, accu-ate information about developments in Ethiopia has been almost impossible to ome by. In the early 1990s it was estimated hat approximately 45 per cent of the Ethiopian population were Muslims and 40 per cent Christians.

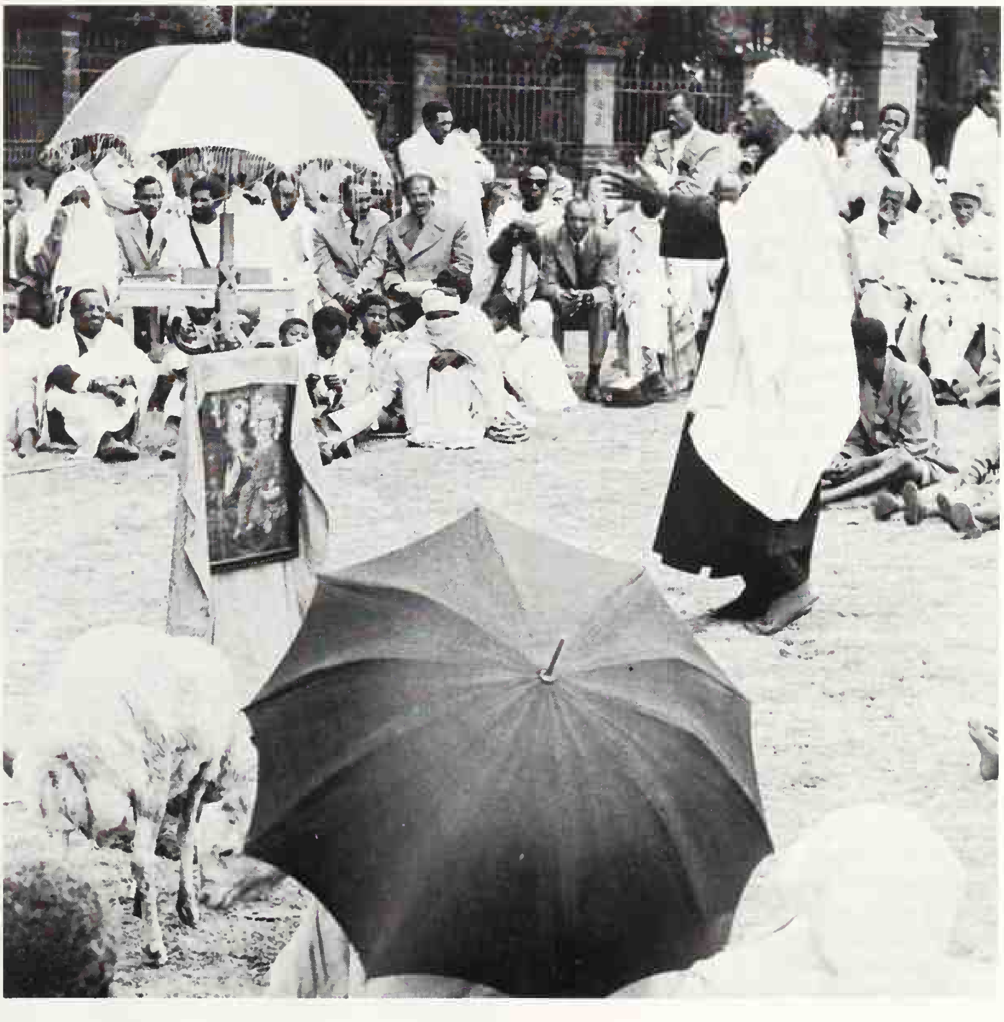
In their impenetrable mountain fastness, mmune from any unwelcome outside influ-ences, the dominant Amharas and Tigreans f the highlands have been Christian since very early times, living in family-based vil-ages and pursuing a relatively advanced orm of agriculture. The one foreign influ-ence which they have been unable to resist s that of Christian (Coptic) Egypt which has always supplied their higher religious values and, until recently, their ecclesias-ical leaders. Moslems are particularly trong in Eritrea and the province of Harar, where spiritual contacts with Arabia and Somalia are easily maintained, though here are also Moslem communities in the Christian regions.

The fertile lowlands of the south and west are the domain of animistic pagan tribes, ften worshipping a sky god, such as the settled, agriculturalist Sidama group. The migration of Galla tribes with their high god, Wak, into Shoa and the western provinces, and the survival of aboriginal Agaw tribe remnants in and near Simen has added independent pagan islets to the cultural patchwork of the High Plateau. Among the Agaw tribes particular interest attaches to the Falasha, the indigenous Ethiopian Jews, who lived according to the pre-Mosaic code of the Pentateuch in settled villages, fulfilling the despised roles of metalworkers and potters. The great majority were rescued from official persecution and airlifted to safe refuge in Israel between 1984 and 1991.

A few negroid remnants, such as the Kunama, survive on the north-western borders, formed into clans which marry outside the group and practise totemism. Their high god, Anna, having created Heaven and Earth, now remains aloof and leaves his people to worship ancestral spirits. In the Christian highlands, the various religious groupings tend to keep to themselves and fulfill specific roles in society, the Moslems engaging in trade and commerce and the pagans forming low-status artisan classes.

The Coming of Christianity

The original population of Ethiopia was probably negroid but in remote antiquity these were driven to the southern and western fringes by Cushitic invaders. At various periods during the first millenium BC, groups of south Arabian colonists

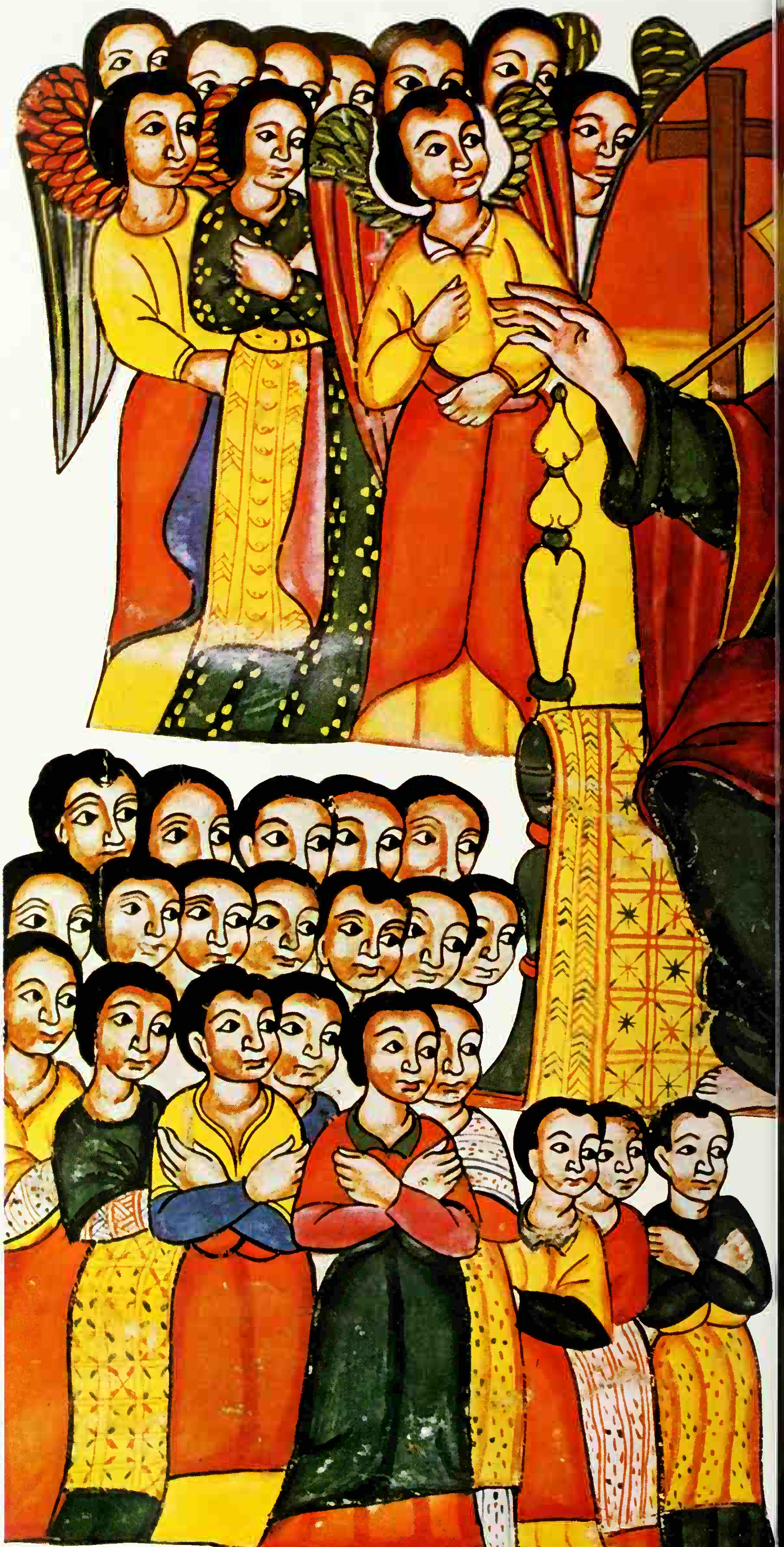


Camera Press London

Left Part of the royal treasure from the ancient ity of Aksum, once the centre of Christian missionary activity and the home of Ethiopian mperors who were thought to be descended rom Solomon and the Queen of Sheba *Right* A *dabtara* or lay preacher performs an improvised ervice with the traditional umbrella, icon and traying lamb

migrated to Eritrea, bringing with them their Semitic language and religion, along with other material benefits of their superior culture. Judaism may have followed in the wake of this movement. Though the invaders inevitably were submerged by the local population, their cultural values survived and, once adopted by the Cushitic peoples, permitted the development of a ruling elite in the northern highlands. This cultural synthesis matured in isolation and somewhere before 200 AD the city of Aksum rose to prominence as the centre of a large tribal empire which covered much of the Horn of Africa.

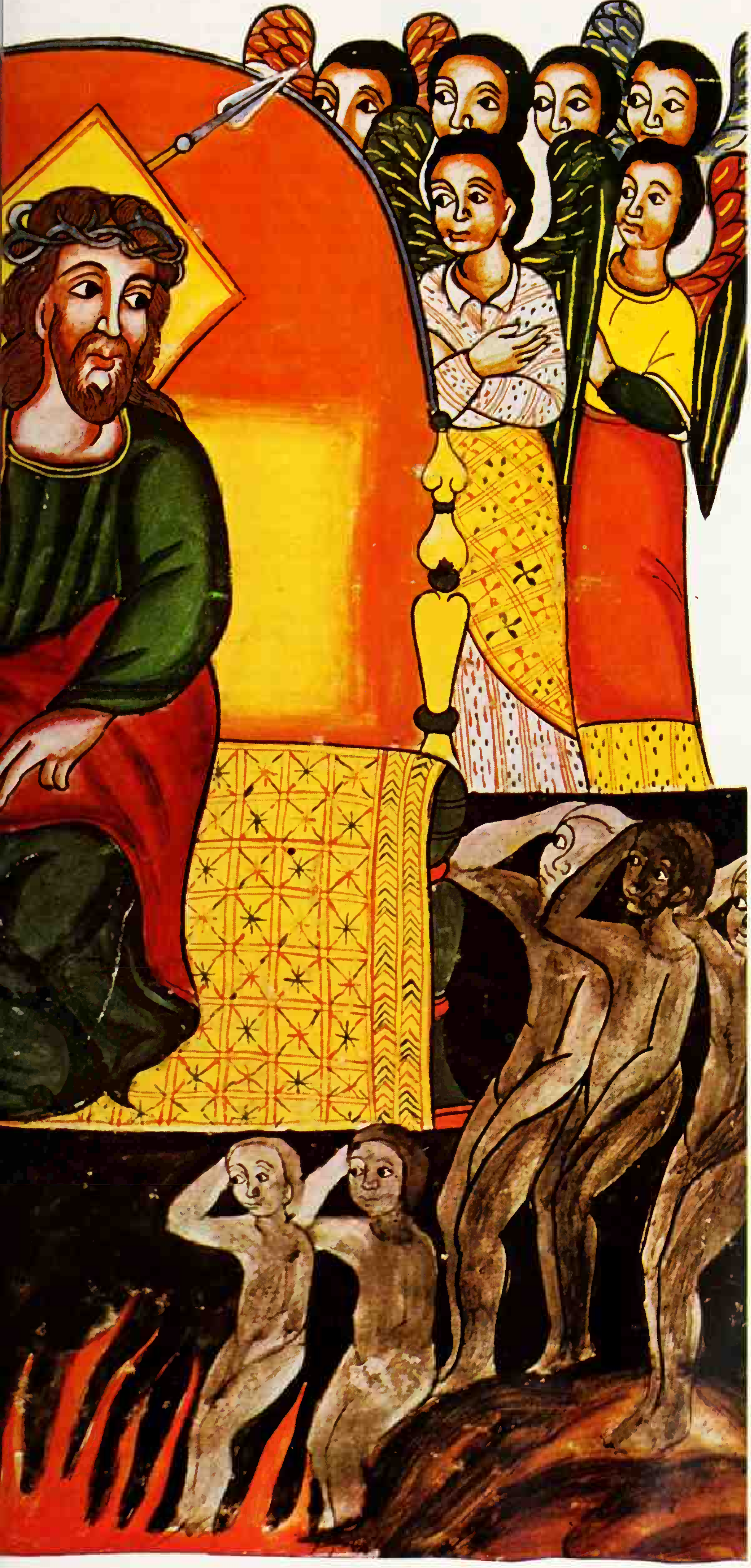
Aksum was already familiar with Greek culture when, about 330 AD, Christianity was introduced under the Emperor Ezana; though there is reason to believe that the initial conversion of the court was politically motivated and that the true conversion of the people rather occurred in the following century when a number of Syrian monks came to the land to escape persecution after the Council of Chalcedon (451) had banned Monophysitism. Aksum now maintained close trading and cultural links with the Byzantine world, but the spread of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries isolated her from her spiritual contacts.



Son of the Invincible Ares

The South Arabians had introduced to Ethiopia their pantheon, which consisted of the moon god Ilmuqah or Sin, the sun goddess Dhat Himyam or Shams, and the male morning star Athtar, the Astarte of the Phoenicians. It is difficult to assign relative importance to these gods but it is significant that only Athtar was known to all the South Semitic peoples by the same name. Ilmuqah is purely Sabaean while Sin is from the Hadramaut, and the sun existed under many local designations. The crescent and circle symbol of the moon and sun is frequent in early Aksumite art and featured on some coins of the reign of the Emperor Ezana, latterly giving way to the cross. Even now it appears sporadically in magical drawings.

However, only Athtar survived in the speech of the people to give a northern word *astar*, meaning 'sky' and 'god'. The pagan inscriptions of Ezana modified the pantheon into Astar, Beher or Medr (Earth) and Mahrem (War). It is clear that the last



In isolated monasteries, monks passed their lives painstakingly illustrating the word of God. The Last Judgement from an Ethiopian version of the New Testament, now in the British Museum

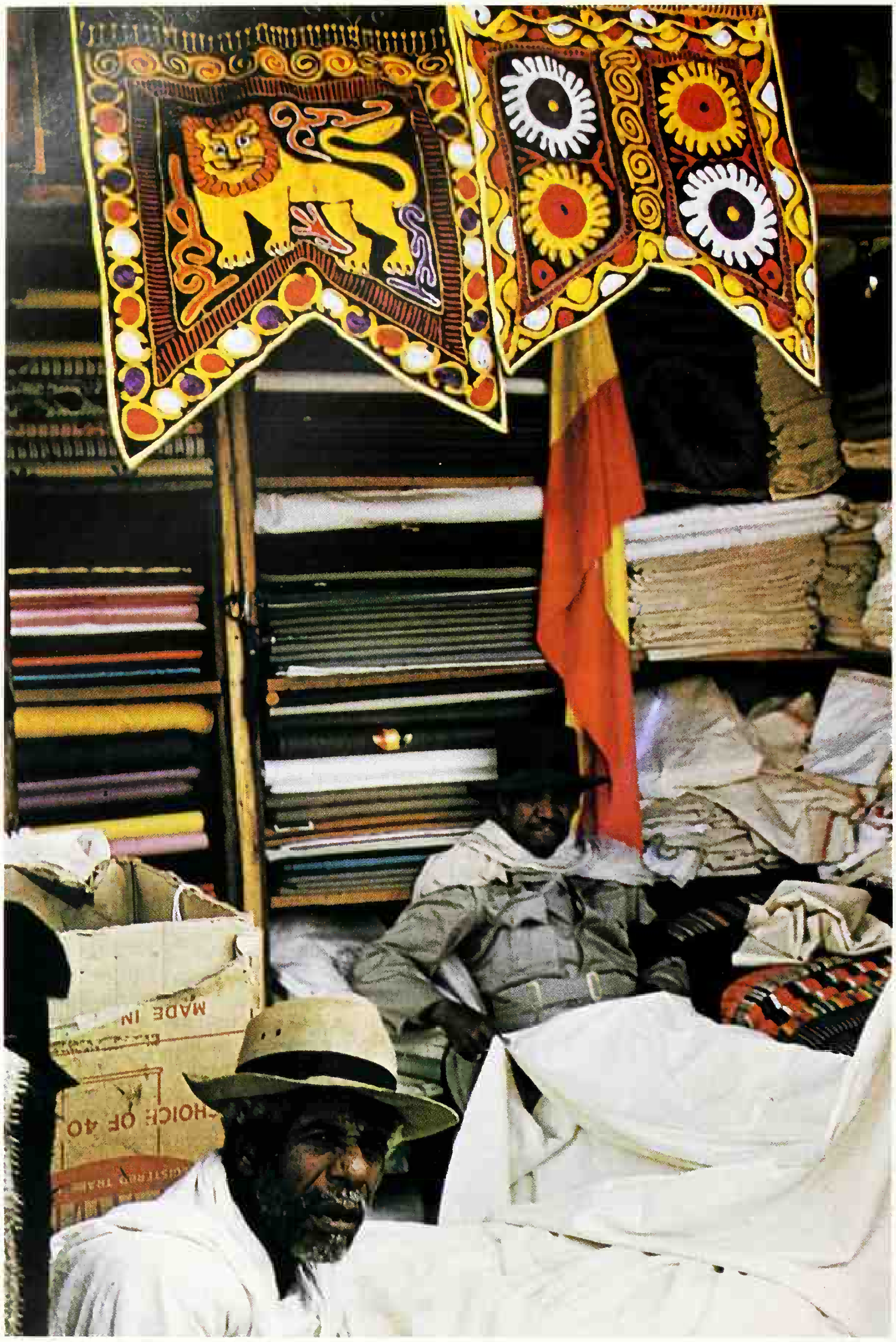
British Museum

of these was the most important, for in several Greek inscriptions the king of Aksum styles himself 'son of the invincible Ares', and other deities receive no mention. The pagan system has remained so rooted in the beliefs of the people that the Ethiopic word for 'God', *Egziabeher*, literally means 'Lords of the Earth' while 'the Lord' is rendered by the plural form *Amlak*, obvious echoes of polytheism and an indication of how Christianity accommodated itself to popular feeling.

Despite internal threats in the 8th century, the Church somehow survived as the pivot of the state and so it remained, despite occasional schisms, until the 1970s. However, as it had always been impervious to outside influences, except those transmitted by Coptic Egypt, its chief features remained decidedly Oriental. As Edward Ullendorff has pointed out (*The Ethiopians*, 1965), many elements in Ethiopian Monophysitism are unquestionably of Judaic origin and must be very ancient. One may mention circumcision, which conforms closely to Jewish practice, the maintenance of Mosaic dietary prohibitions, the insistence on ritual purity, and the ground plan of churches. Moreover, the Ethiopian national saga, which probably dates back to Aksumite times, argued that the royal house was descended from the union of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba, a legend formerly incorporated as fact within the Constitution and no doubt a reflection of the south Arabian origins of the dominant culture.

Cult of the Serpent

Paganism has left its mark in many areas. The favoured site for a church is a hill-top, usually in association with a sacred grove. The cross surmounting the church is often adorned with an ostrich shell, a practice encountered in shrines in Arabia and Syria too. Possibly a reflection of an ancient cult of the Mother Earth goddess may be detected in the excessive veneration accorded to the Virgin Mary, often to the detriment of God himself. Similarly local spirit worship may be viewed as the origin of the widespread cult of miracle-working saints, native and foreign. The classic motif is that of the saint coming from distant parts who enters an inaccessible region to convert the people and found a monastery,



Mark Riboud-Magnum

The designation of Christ as the Lion of Judah was one of the titles adopted by the Emperor of Ethiopia *Left* In the market at Addis Ababa hangs the banner of the Lion, embracing both Church and State

by preference on a mountain-top and frequently in association with a cave. The multiplicity of recurrent festivals, of which the Ethiopians probably have more than any other branch of Christianity, may also derive from an ancient cycle of pagan festivals; the New Year Masqal festival in September, for example, culminates in the burning of a mammoth bonfire on a hill-top, round which oxen and sheep are led three times before being sacrificed and left for the birds and jackals to consume.

Most of the races of Ethiopia draw on a common stock of mythical beliefs. There is abundant evidence in all faiths of an aboriginal cult of the sky god who is involved in fertility and rain-making rites, while the earth, particularly woods and streams, is inhabited by genii, who were not necessarily evil but required propitiation. The official Solomonic legend in its turn has had more ancient traditions grafted onto it. The Tigreans tell how in Tamben there once lived a tyrannical snake king, Waynaba, who required of his subjects an annual tribute of a maiden and a quantity of milk. The people of Aksum ultimately found a young man, Angabo, who was to become the father of Sheba, and he, by the exercise of magic, succeeded in killing the snake and thus became king of Aksum.

A snake cult, evidence of which is forthcoming in South Arabia and Socotra, must be deep-rooted in this part of the world. The Ethiopians believe that in ancient times the land was divided between those who followed the Hebrew faith and those who worshipped Arwe ('serpent'); another old tradition alleges that the world is encircled by two serpents, Leviathan and Behemoth. Attitudes to snakes nowadays vary from province to province. In Shoa house-snakes are shown respect, but in Begemder they are regarded with outright fear and the people wear talismans of herbs to get protection from them.

Other creatures also assume importance from cultic association. Augury by the behaviour of birds is an important preliminary to any expedition or hunt, while the cock seems to be connected with kingship. The legitimacy of the future Solomonic king Yekuno Amlak (1268-83) is said to have been recognized when as a child he unwittingly consumed the head of a cock. A very important symbol of royalty is the bee, whose honey and wax were formerly reserved to the king. A legend tells how the future greatness of the Zagwe king Lalibela (died 1220), builder of the famous rock churches, was recognized in childhood when a swarm of bees settled round his head. On a more general level the hunt had a major ritual function for all warriors as proof of bravery, and the coronation of a king was traditionally followed by one in which animals otherwise reserved to the king were killed, a clear sign of totemism.

The Church's Attitude to Magic

Belief in the efficacy of magic is widespread throughout Ethiopia, not least among the Christian communities. The attitude of the Church here is ambiguous. It accords at least tacit recognition to certain facets of magic which do not specifically run counter to Christian dogma. In the *Anaphora* of Jacob of Serug, for example, there occurs a reference to the magical name Melos, the fiery sword, which some have interpreted as a form of the name Solomon in reverse. A number of short magical texts where the religious content is clear have been given approval, despite the ban on such materials issued by the councils of Nicaea and Galatea. Consisting largely of extracts from the Scriptures, stories of saints and other holy writings, their magical content is innocuous, hardly more than the mention of 'acceptable' magical names, and their practical value to the owner is largely prophylactic, though a very few may find their way into use in Church services.

However, when confronted with witchcraft or anything suggestive of black magic, the Church takes a severely prohibitive, if unavailing, line. It has always been an offence to practise magic and in early chronicles one reads of punitive measures taken against pagan and magical cults. The Emperor Sara Yaqob (1434-8) in particular took a stand against such practices and personally composed disputations on the subject. During his reign large sections of the people had abandoned Christianity in

Nucleus of the Truth

Mass in an Ethiopian monastery

There were twenty or thirty monks around us and some women and babies from the *tukals*. Communion was administered to the babies, but to no one else. Many of the monks were crippled or deformed in some way; presumably they were pilgrims who had originally come to the spring in the hope of a cure, and had become absorbed into the life of the place. There seemed to be very little system of testing vocations in the community. The priests and deacons wore long, white-and-gold cloaks and tulhans, and had bare feet. Now and then they emerged from the sanctuary, and once they walked round in procession. The singing was monotonous and more or less continuous, accompanied by a drum and sistrums (silver rattles). For anyone accustomed to the Western rite it was difficult to think of this as a Christian service, for it bore that secret and confused character which I had hitherto associated with the non-Christian sects of the East...

At Debra Lebanos I suddenly saw the classic basilica as a great positive achievement... I saw the Church of the first century as a dark and hidden thing, as dark and hidden as the seed germinating in the womb; legionaries off duty slipping furtively out of the barracks, greeting each other by signs and passwords in a locked upper room in the side street of some Mediterranean seaport... The priests hid their office, practising trades; their identity was known only to initiates; they were criminals against the law of their country. And the pure nucleus of the truth lay in the minds of the people, encumbered with superstitions...

And I began to see how these obscure sanctuaries had grown, with the clarity of the Western reason, into the great open altars of Catholic Europe, where Mass is said in a flood of light, high in the sight of all, while tourists can clatter round with their Baedekers, incurious of the mystery.

Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People*

favour of paganism and the Emperor is praised as one who 'eradicated Dask and Marit and Tafant and Maqawzay and Dino, magicians and all who worship idols and their sorcery.' The measures do not seem to have been effective, for even now these very names recur in magical writings.

The people, however, are more sympathetic. By nature conservative and superstitious, they lay greater stress on practice than on dogma. Their God is the jealous deity of the Old Testament rather than a source of compassion and they feel that the Church's promise of happiness to come is poor compensation for tribulation on earth. To some extent Christ and the Virgin are more reliable in this respect.

The superstitions to which they fall victim are prevalent throughout the Near East and North Africa. Perhaps the greatest fear is of the Evil Eye, which they believe to be exercised by malevolent spirits and also by certain humans, notably blacksmiths and other artisan groups such as the Falasha. Talismans of coloured ribbons or gold and silver plates are often placed round the necks of children as a protective measure and most Ethiopians will not appreciate a compliment paid to a child, unless accompanied by the saving phrase, 'God be praised'. Animals and houses are also at risk and for the latter a dried aloe plant or a stuffed crocodile set over the door s held to afford some protection.

Names of Power

Names are another source of danger. The Ethiopians believe that a name is the essence or soul of the person or object to which it is applied. Whoever learns this name gains power over the bearer. Utterance of a name thus becomes a potential act of creation or of destruction. Though not perhaps as cautious in this respect as, say, the Berbers, Ethiopians are unlikely to reveal their baptismal names – if they can remember them – and the use of nicknames to thwart evil spirits is widespread. On a higher level great virtue attaches to the names of God, knowledge of which facilitates one's progress to Paradise. Since God has many powers and attributes, he also has many names and it is said that Christ revealed the greatest of these as Berhana'el. Typical is the belief that the three Persons of the Trinity existed in name only in the primordial ocean and that each assumed form by the pronouncing of his name.

Possession by Zar and Buda

It is in the popular view of diseases as spirit-induced that we are best able to study magic in practice. Most of the evidence we possess concerns the northern provinces, particularly Begemder where the town of Gondar emerged as a major centre for magic and sorcery.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous type of spirit is the Zar, whose name is variously said to be of Galla or Agaw origin. Although probably derived from devil-worship, of which much evidence exists elsewhere, they are represented as white-faced and so are not evil. There are many Zars and their activities and social organizations exactly parallel those of humans. They have a king, own property and engage in various trades. They fall ill, are subject to the evil eye and may be attacked by other types of spirit. Unfortunately, they have a predilection for possessing humans, usually unmarried women who have offended them. The victim, called *faras*, or 'horse', betrays signs of mental illness, behaving like a horse and singing heroic songs.

Since the Zar is not actually maleficent, it is sufficient to propitiate him and persuade him to leave his 'horse' and reside elsewhere. This is the task of certain individuals who are known to possess the powers of mediums. To the accompaniment of songs and dance and the burning of scented herbs, the victim is driven into a frenzy until the Zar, speaking through his victim, ultimately reveals his name. Once this is known, he can be persuaded to depart in return for various offerings, such as meal and the sacrifice of a cock.

Although Zar possession provides a convenient opportunity for malingering, reliable observers have often been convinced of its genuineness. Michael Leiris, a scholar who has made a particular study of Ethiopian magic, has drawn attention to the theatrical aspect of the performance and the fact that the victim will go through a set range of actions specific to the Zar without any apparent foreknowledge or prompting, to the extent of distorting their speech into an argot of which they will later claim no knowledge.

Far more serious is the malevolent Buda with his Evil Eye. He is not strictly a spirit but a human being practising black magic. One is born a Buda and cannot change. Blacksmiths and the Falasha are particularly suspect here and receive much ill-treatment in consequence. The Buda, who has the power to change himself into a hyena, is said to lure people to lonely spots, where he attacks them, eats them and drinks their blood. Less harmfully, he may change into a stone on a path and trip up his victim, or simply cast the Evil Eye on him so that he becomes unaccountably ill. The favoured season for this is the end of August after a shower of rain. The Buda is dealt with in a manner very similar to the Zar but his exorcism involves a contest of wills with the medium, rather than persuasion. Once he has been named, the unfortunate blacksmith will be summoned and forced to release his victim. While being possessed by a Buda one may experience a craving for charcoal, and afterwards there is total amnesia. As a talisman one may wear a hyena skin pouch containing the root of the tenadam plant (fennel).

Lesser Spirits

Among the many lesser spirits there are the Ser'era, the midday spirits of rivers and deserts. Each household has one and he is good or evil according to his reception. There are also the Aganent who are river deities who live in villages and possess property which one may see reflected on the surface of the water. They have human form and are black. Though some are liable to drown the unwary swimmer, others render assistance to men in the home or on the farm. When crossing a river one must conciliate the Aganent by throwing in herbs or food, naming oneself and the river and drinking some water. A deity associated with empty houses, thresholds and closed doors is Maggaria. Sacrifice must be made to him when a house is built, and most urgently when it is reoccupied. He is a menace to the first person to open a door, and dawn becomes a hazardous time to go visiting. To thwart his power one must spit into the house just as the door is opened.

All ailments are said to be the work of specific demons, and demand treatment as such. Infertility and complications of childbirth are attributed to Shotelay, whilst

To gain protection from diseases it is the custom to wear magical amulets, consisting of long strips of leather inscribed with texts intended to avert evil

childhood illnesses are caused by a witch called Werzelya (probably identical with the Hebrew Lilith), who slew the son of Saint Susneyos and was speared to death by him. Another belief alleges that the negroid Barya tribe work in concert with the Devil to cause epilepsy.

To gain protection from diseases it is the custom to wear magical amulets, consisting of long strips of leather inscribed with texts intended to avert evil. The term for this, *ketab*, is pure Arabic, where it means 'book', above all the Koran. A brisk business in these is carried on by *dabtaras*, or lay Church deacons, as a lucrative side-line to their ecclesiastical and teaching duties. Dabtaras have a reputation for cunning and some are said to be able to conjure up the Devil from a stream and elicit from him information about the future.

Amulets, composed in the dead Ethiopic language, may be of a general nature and are often the semi-official texts approved by the Church, but there is a wide range of purely magical ones, drawing on a common stock of legends, prayers and hymns which are selected and adapted as required by the individual case. Into these are inserted innumerable magical names of God and the angels, Solomon, and the like, and also of less reputable personalities such as Satan.

Frequent also are unintelligible magical words. These are only effective if not generally understood, so that foreign words are specially favoured. Research into these has revealed traces of words of Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew and probably Cushitic origin. Hebrew is very desirable, though most examples given are highly suspect, and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are regularly named. Curiously one encounters the Ethiopian equivalent of the ancient Latin palindrome (a word or phrase that reads the same backwards and forwards), 'Sator arepo tenet opera rotas', in the garbled form 'Sador alador danat adera rodas'; the phrase is said to represent the names of the five nails of the cross.

The Semitic tradition underlying these texts emerges just as clearly from the drawings which punctuate the narrative, without necessarily being related to it. Designs themselves indeed may constitute an amulet. These have now been subjected to analysis by Ewald Wagner, who has revealed thematic links with magical materials from Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, Iran, and Armenia. The drawings are often obscure and it is probable that there is a given range of motifs which the dabtara may draw on at will. Two popular designs are the open-ended Greek cross with the face of God in its centre, and a spider-like device, perhaps representing the net used by Solomon to catch demons.

Magical Prescriptions

A common figure is that of a guardian angel with drawn sword, probably Fanu'el, the exorcist. The Werzelya amulet usually depicts Saint Susneyos, mounted, driving his spear into the prostrate, black-faced witch. Animals appear more rarely, though snakes, fish and lions are occasionally depicted. A convention of Armenian origin demands that an evil figure must be shown in profile to counteract the effects of the Evil Eye, or occasionally simply omitting the pupil of the eye. There are also groups of deformed Ethiopic letters bearing circles at their extremities, which are worked into the actual text; these were probably intended to ward off evil.

If a man falls ill despite these precautions, he may go to the local dabtara who will copy out a prescription from his book of remedies and sell it to the invalid. Alternatively, he may prefer to consult a *tankway*, 'sorcerer', who will prescribe less orthodox, magical methods of treatment. The remedy may include the wearing of an amulet, repetition of magical words and names, burning herbs, sacrifice, and other forms of sympathetic magic. Specific day are regarded as propitious for treatmen and the position of the patient is important The scholars Marcel Griaule and Stefa Strelcyn have published examples of prescription books, and Maxime Rodinson ha produced a sort of Ethiopian medical directory of specialists for the Gondar area. I lists their names, addresses, specialities methods and fees.

With a prayer stick from ancient Egypt th *dabtara* ceaselessly sings psalms whil awaiting death and sainthood: these holy me are often consulted about the future

Raiders of the Lost Ark

According to Ethiopian legend, Menelik, son of Solomon and the queen of Sheba, returned when he was a man to Jerusalem, where he and Azarius, son of Zadok the high priest, carried off the Ark of the Covenant from the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The Ark was eventually installed in a sanctuary of the church of St Mary of Zion in Aksum, and it is said that it was regularly carried into battle – as it had been by the Jews – bringing victory as recently as the defeat of the Italians at Adowa in 1893. A priest still devotes his life to guarding the shrine, and a replica of the Ark is displayed each year in the ceremony of *Timkat*.

Ethiopian Christians crave for immortality and in order to assure their transition to Paradise without too much tiresom preparation they bury an amulet with thei dead known as *Lefafa sedq*, which E. A. W Budge names the 'Bandlet of Righteousness'; traditionally this should be the sam length as the owner. Budge has draw attention to many features common to thi interesting document and the version of th Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' current i Graeco-Roman times. It lays great stress o knowledge of the secret names of God, b whom it was allegedly written. Thes names were revealed to Christ at the insistence of Mary who was anxious to spare he servants the terrors of Judgement and th torments of the River of Fire. The text contains many ideas derived from Egyptia Gnosticism and apocalyptic Hebrew works It is noteworthy, however, that the elaborate funerary rites prescribed in the *Lefaf sedq* are not in fact supported by actua practice in Ethiopia, where burial is carrie out with little ceremony other than dramatic mourning. The mere fact of possessing the amulet was a sufficient guarantee to the owner, who probably could no have read it anyway.

ARTHUR K. IRVIN

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The sombre, savage religion of the mysterious ancient Etruscans included a preoccupation with divination and sacrifice, and a morbid obsession with hell and damnation

ETRUSCANS

'MYSTERIOUS' is the word popularly applied to the Etruscans. This conventional epithet has arisen for many reasons: the uncertainty shrouding their origin, the fact that their language is partly undeciphered, the apparent concern of much of their religious beliefs with the underworld and divination, and the fact that when the archeologist first began to uncover their material remains the chief source of investigation was provided by large chamber tombs with frescoes which included scenes of the tortures of the damned, reminiscent of the Hell of some medieval painters.

The discovery of their civilization has sometimes led to an overappraisal of its achievements and similarly their religious beliefs have often been surrounded by an aura of mystery not always justified by the facts. As a result of this attitude, even a well-known Etruscan scholar can regard the central pillar in their chamber-tombs as symbolizing the uniting of the world and the underworld, whereas the prosaic fact probably is that the pillar was designed merely to keep the roof up.

Who were the Etruscans? A partial answer, with which few would quarrel, is that the Etrusci (or Tusci), as the Romans called them, lived in Tuscany in central Italy from at least the 7th century BC. They extended their influence southwards to the area around Naples (in the process engulfing the Latin city of Rome, where Etruscan kings ruled in the 6th century) and later northwards to the northern plain of the Po valley. About 500 BC the southern area including Rome shook off their rule, confining their power increasingly to the district of Tuscany, and in the 4th and 3rd centuries they were finally forced to submit to Rome's expanding might: they were absorbed into Rome's Italian confederacy and in 90 BC became Roman citizens.

It is when one tries to look back before the 7th century that difficulties arise as to their identity. It is generally agreed that their language, although written in a form of the Greek alphabet, does not belong to the Indo-European group which was spoken in historical times by most of the peoples of Italy (Iron Age peoples, Latins, Samnites, Greeks and others), and it is the opinion of most of the ancient writers from Herodotus onwards that the Etruscans had settled in Italy as a conquering aristocracy coming from Asia Minor. However, one Greek writer, Dionysius, who lived at the turn of our era, believed them to be indigenous, descendants of the prehistoric peoples of Italy. Today emphasis is laid less on the problem of origin and more on the fact that Etruscan civilization, as we know it, evolved on the soil of Italy.

Although perhaps insoluble, the problem is important, not least from the religious point of view. If the Etruscans came from the East, it is easier to explain certain affinities between their beliefs (in divination, for instance) and those found in Mesopotamia. In any case there is a strong 'oriental' element in Etruscan civilization which was partly transmitted from the Greeks. If they were indigenous to Italy, one would have to seek the origin of their religious beliefs primarily among the earlier inhabitants of Italy.

One thing is beyond doubt: the basis of the population of Etruria from the 7th century onwards was descended from the earlier Iron Age peoples. Either these people, who cremated their dead, somehow developed the Etruscan civilization, where burial was the main rite – and certainly this process would be a major mystery – or else a small minority of Etruscans with a superior culture came from overseas, conquered the land, and by exploiting its natural resources and the manpower of its earlier inhabitants, built up a complex political system based on city states in an area which had seen little more than the huts of the Iron Age villagers.

Clues from the Past

Our sources of knowledge of Etruscan religious thought and practice fall into three groups. Firstly, a few Etruscan inscriptions, secondly the archeological remains which are numerous but cannot speak and are subject to varying interpretation, and thirdly the writings of later Greeks and Romans.

The chief Etruscan inscriptions include a clay tablet from Capua (near Naples) of the 5th or 4th century BC, which deals with funeral ceremonies and contains the names of several Etruscan deities; a liturgical text written on the wrappings of an Egyptian mummy now in Zagreb, of the 2nd and 1st centuries; a model bronze liver with inscribed names of gods from Piacenza in northern Italy; a lead tablet with names of deities from Magliano, Tuscany; and two sheets of gold, discovered in 1964 at Pyrgi (southern Etruria) which date from about 500 BC. This source of knowledge, is however, limited by its paucity and our inability to translate it completely.

Archeological evidence includes numerous tombs and their contents. Whole cemeteries survive, at Tarquinii and Caere, laid out like towns containing streets of tombs of varying size and style, many being great tumulus mounds with circular stone bases cut in the rock. Usually the interiors are decorated like houses, which suggests that the Etruscans wanted the dead to 'feel at home' in replicas of their earthly houses, and often the walls were painted with scenes of daily life, depicting banquets, dancing, music, and athletic games. In the later tombs, however, the paintings are more concerned with the underworld and its terrifying demons suggesting that the earlier gaiety was being suppressed by a grimmer attitude to the hereafter.

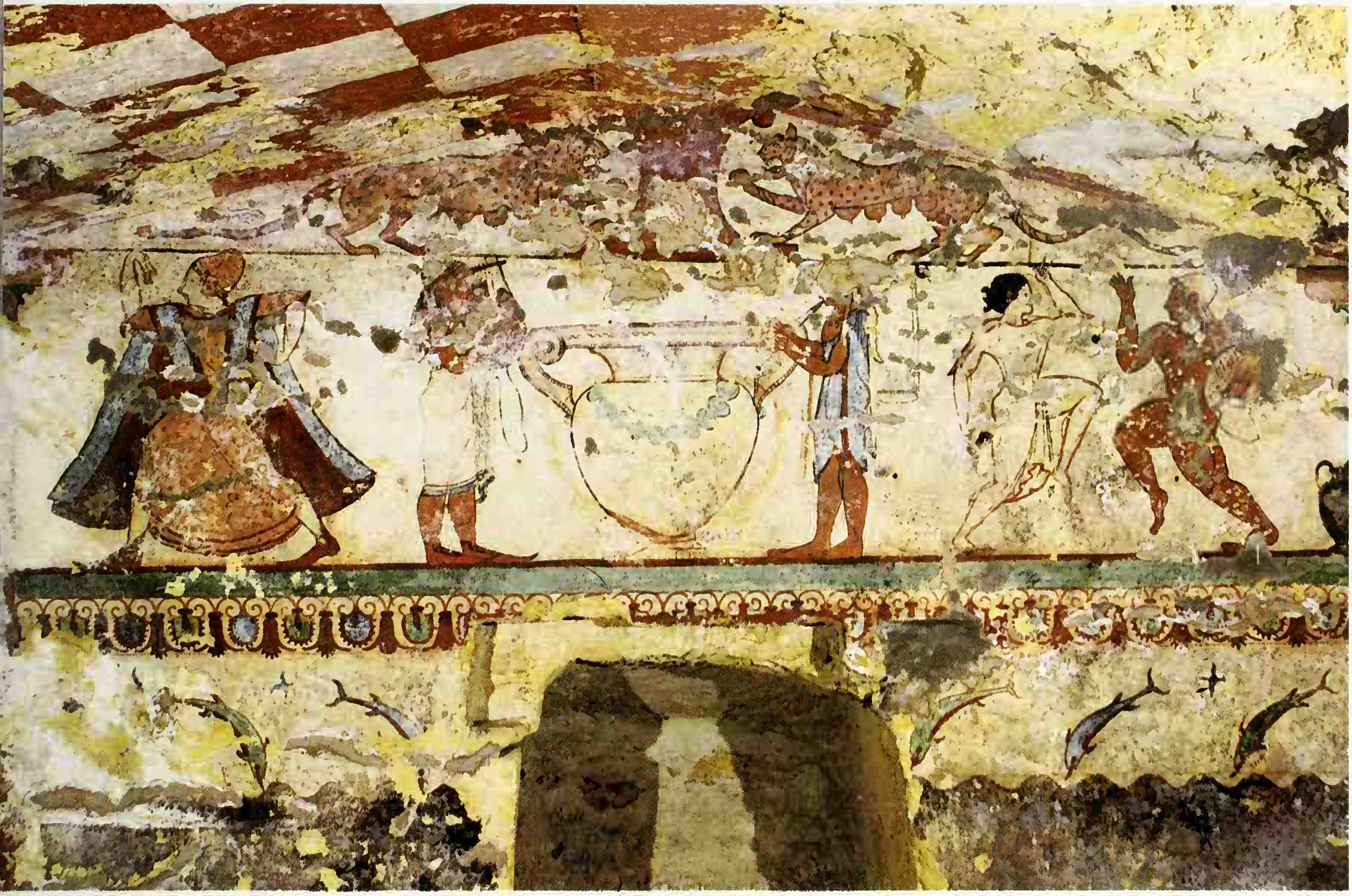
These tombs underline a weakness in our evidence in almost all spheres: so much of it is late in time and represents the later stages of Etruscan history and belief; much less is known about the 7th century, and indeed about the lower classes in society than about the rich who could afford these magnificent burials. Reliefs on sarcophagi and ur depict the dead starting on their journey the underworld, and their lids may bear scul tured figures of the deceased. Smaller objec such as statuettes, reveal the characteristi of the various deities, while the backs bronze mirrors often decorated with mythol gical scenes indicate how much the Etrusca borrowed and adapted from Greek mytholog

As for literary evidence, apart from sca tered references throughout Greek a Roman literature, a valuable source was pr vided by such Roman writers of Etrusc origin of the 1st century BC as Tarquini Priscus and Aulus Caecina, who translat into Latin some of the Etruscan religio books. Unfortunately only a few fragmen survive, and even these are probably co taminated with later ideas; but they confir the important fact that Etruscan religio belief, unlike Greek and Roman, w 'revealed'. It is said to have been taught the Etruscans by seers, such as the mythol gical Tages, who miraculously appeared to peasant and then revealed to the assembl Etruscans the science of divination by t inspection of the entrails of sacrific animals or by the flight of birds. Mar sacred books were later attributed to hi (*libri Tagetici*), while a prophetess name Vegoia, or Begoe, expounded cosmology an the ordinances of the God Tinia, the Etru can Jupiter, regarding the division of lan All this teaching was embodied in a co of religious practices, the *disciplina Etrusca*

This sacred literature included the Boo on Lightning, Books of Haruspices (diviner and Books of Ritual. The first dealt with t interpretation of thunder and lightnin various gods threw thunderbolts which th revealed their will if rightly interpreted i accordance both with the part of the sky i which they appeared – it was divided into 1 parts – and with the places or objects struc the latter became sacred or taboo. Tini threw three kinds of thunderbolt of varyi import, while eight other gods threw or each. A special type of calendar known a brontoscopic, interpreting the significan of the bolts for each day of the year, has bee preserved by a late writer, John Lydus.

The *haruspices* were priests concerne particularly with divination through th inspection of livers; this art, known a hepatoscopy, was a particular Etrusca ritual. On an Etruscan mirror the see Calchas is depicted foretelling the future i this way; on another a *haruspex* is makin predictions in the presence of a god and th Etruscan hero Tarchon. Even better know is the bronze model of a sheep's liver, foun at Piacenza. It is divided into 44 section inscribed with the names of gods and repre sents the heavens orientated by the cardina points and the home (*Templum*) of the gods

The liver of the sacrifice represents th state of the world at the moment of sacrific and indicated the will of heaven; its variou parts were related to the correspondin parts of the heavens, and predictions turne on the appearance (especially abnormalities and colour of the liver. In later times th Roman Senate, when in doubt about th meaning of omens, would appeal to thes expert Etruscan diviners.



Scala

Scenes of daily life, banquets, dancing, music and games, painted on the walls of vast Etruscan tombs, suggest that the Etruscans wanted their dead to 'feel at home' in replicas of their earthly houses: Tomb of the Lionesses at Tarquinii

The *Libri Rituales* probably contained irections for all aspects of public and rivate life. We know that they laid down nstructions for the founding of cities, the onsecration of temples and altars, the sur- eying and allotment of land, matters of roperty and many affairs which should be egarded as legal rather than religious.

ooks of Fate and Death

'here were also Books of Fate and Death hich were probably included in the *Libri ituales*. The duration of an individual's fe was determined by fate, and even that f the Etruscan nation was limited to ten *aecula* or cycles, the eighth of which ended n 88 BC; although the threat of fate might e delayed by sacrifices until the tenth aeculum, thereafter it could not be averted. imilarly the universe, according to a late assage which may have been influenced by he book of Genesis, had its determined istory of 12 millennia: during the first 000 years the demiurge or creator of he universe had created heaven and earth, he firmament, the sea, waters and land, the un, moon and stars, all that creeps, flies r runs in earth, air and water, and man, ho would endure for the next 6000 years.

In Macaulay's poem, *Lays of Ancient ome*, he speaks of the 'nine gods' by which ars Porsena of Clusium swore 'that the reat house of Tarquin' (the Etruscan king) hould suffer wrong no more'. We know the ames of more than Macaulay's nine gods orshipped by the Etruscans, but little bout their functions and relationships, and while many have Etruscan names, they were early affected by Greek and oriental influences and equated with the names of Greek and Roman deities. Such equation of names does not of course always involve complete identity of function.

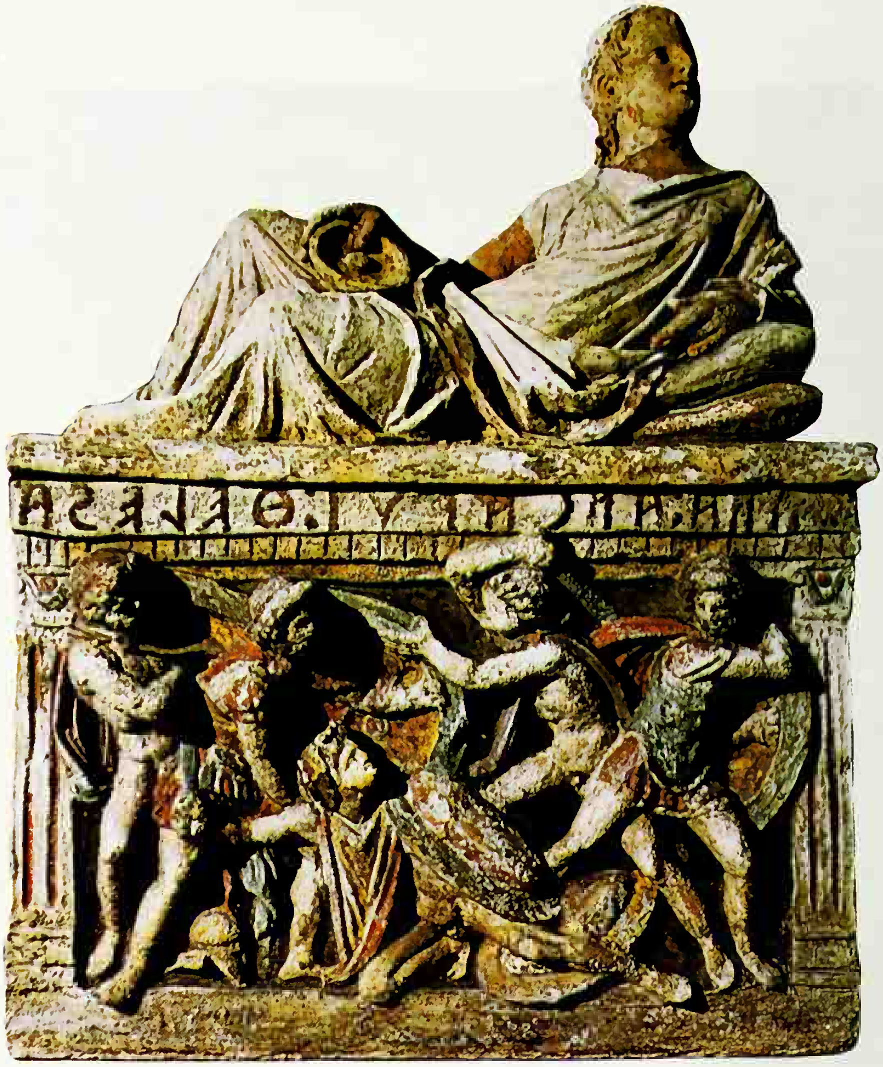
The chief god Tinia or Tin, a thunder-god, was identified with Zeus and Jupiter. Voltumna (Vertumnus) was also very highly honoured. Tinia was worshipped alongside Uni (Juno) and Menrva (Minerva) in tripartite temples of which the most famous is that on the Capitol at Rome, built by the Etruscan kings, in the 6th century BC. The god Sethlans was identified with Hephaestus-Vulcan, Fufluns with Dionysus-Bacchus, Turms with Hermes-Mercury, Turan with Aphrodite-Venus. The Greek Apollo, Artemis and Hercules appear as Aplu, Aritimi and Hercle. No doubt many of the gods had mythologies of their own before they were identified with Greek counterparts.

The Greek Charon and other lesser deities of the underworld gained increasing importance as this aspect of the future loomed larger in Etruscan thought. Other deities had local or family names, and the city of Populonia near Piombino may have been named after Fufluns. The process by which alien deities might be welcomed into the Etruscan pantheon is illustrated by the Pyrgi inscriptions which record the introduction of the Punic Astarte into the Sanctuary of Uni with the name Uni-Astarte. In addition, there were many groupings of gods and a host of minor deities. Beside the triad of Tinia, Uni and Menrva, there were the 'nine' gods who hurled lightning, *Dei Superiores* who counselled Tinia about when to throw his worst thunderbolt, other advisers named *Dii Consentes*, the Penates, the Lares and others, many of whom were perhaps regarded as gods of fate.

The gods were worshipped in temples, the earliest known dating to 600 BC. It may be that open air sanctuaries with altars were used in more primitive times. The temples were set in sacred precincts, usually against the rear wall, with an altar standing in the space in front. They contained the cult statue of the god: the most famous surviving one is the terracotta statue of Apollo at Veii near Rome.

Funeral Games

Little is known of the ceremonies, sacrifices and prayers, which may be described in the inscriptions found at Capua and Zagreb. Doubtless there were formal litanies. Votive gifts could take the form of statuettes of the deities to whom they were offered, and clay models of parts of the human body were offered in gratitude for the cure of these parts or the desire for such healing. Animal sacrifices took two forms: they were called *hostiae animales*, in which the soul or life of the animal was offered to the god in place



The figure on this Etruscan cinerary urn of the 2nd century BC holds a *phiale*, the customary vessel for pouring libations for the gods: now in the British Museum

of a man's, and *hostiae consultatoriae* by which the sacrificer sought the will or advice of the deity in the victim's entrails. Prisoners were also slaughtered for sacrifice.

A less grim aspect of Etruscan religious life is reflected in the games, dances, music, horse-racing, processions, prize-fights and other activities practised in honour or service of the gods and indeed of the dead. Funerals of heroes as in Homeric times were followed by elaborate competitive athletic games, and they are represented in Etruscan art, wall-paintings and sarcophagi. In the Tomb of the Augurs at Tarquinii are depicted two wrestlers with august referees and bronze vases which were the prizes; the frescoes of the Tomb of the Olympic Games show horse and foot races, jumping, boxing and discus throwing. But even this had its sombre aspect. In the Tomb of the Augurs a masked figure (Phersu) with a wild dog on a leash fights a man armed with a cudgel and with his head covered by a sack. Such scenes lend colour to the belief of the ancient writers that Rome originally derived her bloody gladiatorial combats from Etruria, and they no doubt reflect a milder version of the human sacrifices which in more primitive days had accompanied the funerals of princes. We know little of religious festivals as such, but representatives of all the Etruscans met annually at the sanctuary of Voltumna near Volsinii.

The tomb frescoes, with their scenes of feasting and dancing and their more sinister glimpses of torturing demons, suggest the prospect of paradise or hell in an afterlife in which the individuality of the dead survives. Since the wealthy were buried with great riches – shields, weapons and chariots for the warriors and jewellery and toilet articles for the women – the fortunate may have hoped for a continuation of the joys of earthly life. The horrors of hell prefigure the demons of Michelangelo and Dante. The gruesome figures of Charun with his hammer and the vulture-beaked Tuchulcha with donkey ears and armed with serpents, carry off the dead. The parting, when the dead man starts on his long journey, either on foot, horseback, chariot or boat, is vividly shown on many sarcophagi.

Livy described the Etruscans as 'a nation more than any other dedicated to religion, the more so as they excelled in practising it', while the Christian writer Arnobius later described Etruria as the 'creator and mother of superstitions'. The general impression is that unlike the Greeks, the Etruscans felt the insignificance of man dominated by fate and the divine will. Heaven and earth were closely linked, the vault of heaven being orientated and divided up into sections where lived the various deities; sacred areas on earth were correspondingly orientated and divided, while the position in the sky where signs occurred, indicated the god responsible. The omens were interpreted by priests who played an important role in Etruscan society. B means of the received *disciplina* it wa man's task to discover the divine will an then passively to follow. Seneca sums up 'The difference between us (the Greeks an Romans) and the Etruscans is that wherea we believe lightning to be released becaus clouds collide, they believe that cloud collide in order to release lightning.'

H. H. SCULLAR

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Eucharist

The Lord's Supper, Mass or Holy Communion, the principal sacrament of Christianity, in which the worshippers partake of consecrated bread and wine: also sometimes used for the consecrated elements themselves, especially the bread.
See FOOD AND DRINK; MASS

Eve Arnold—Magnum

Euhemerism

The theory that mythology has its origins in history; propounded by the Greek scholar Euhemerus in the 3rd century BC, who tried to prove that the gods were in fact ancient kings who had been deified: in an account of a fabulous journey to islands in the Indian Ocean, he claimed to have discovered inscriptions commemorating great kings and heroes, whose names corresponded with those of the Greek gods: Christians later used the theory to discredit the pagan gods.

EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS

an atmosphere of suspicion both inside and tside the courtrooms,' witch hysteria rose to a ak in the 16th and 17th centuries, accusations eeding further accusations

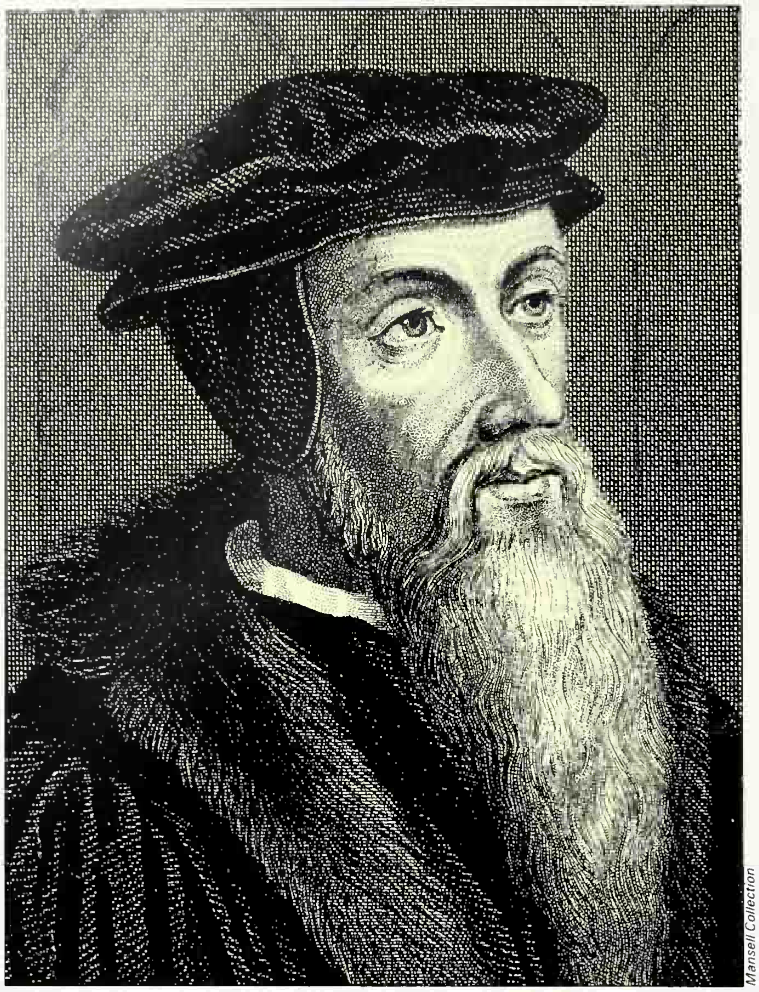
Merely associating with someone suspected of witchcraft was sufficient cause for arrest and imprisonment: from the film *Witchcraft Through the Ages*

National Film Archive

TCH SCARES and witch-hunts in Europe gan in the very late Middle Ages and cul- nated in the 16th and 17th centuries. othing of the kind is known to have hap- ned before about 1300 AD. The whole storical problem involved in interpreting e phenomenon of these persecutions can summed up in that one fact.

Sorcery – the use of, or pretending to, cult powers – was always against the laws the Church. It was probably fairly com- on in early medieval society, but would ve been handled by the ecclesiastical penitential system, which became vastly more ambitious in the 13th century. Secular legal codes of the period are mostly silent on the subject, not out of enlightened liberalism but because it was considered strictly the affair of the Church. The change to an atmosphere of public panic and the demand for violent solutions came quite slowly, and at a time which we are accustomed to think of as one of intellectual progress, although the same period saw an apparent increase in the practice of astrology and alchemy.

Geographically, the first witch-hunts of all were probably on French soil, but the centre shifted eastwards later. In the early stages the panic seems to have been most deeply rooted in the Alpine region. It lingered longest in the Danube basin where quite large scale persecutions occurred as late as the 18th century. Certainly the German-speaking countries suffered the most. After the Reformation persecution seems to have flourished predominantly in territory under Calvinist control, but a causal connection between Calvinism and witch hysteria has not been proved. In the British Isles the scare arrived very late – after the Reformation – and rose to a peak in the Civil War period. It then died down almost completely in England and Scotland; Ireland had scarcely been touched at all. In all three



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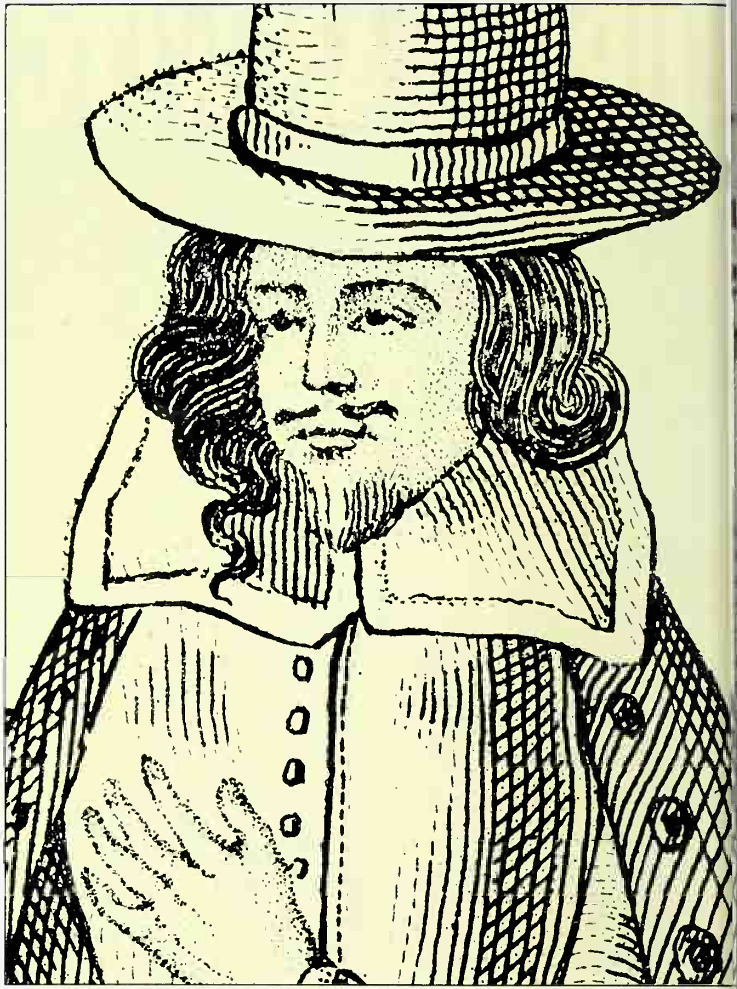
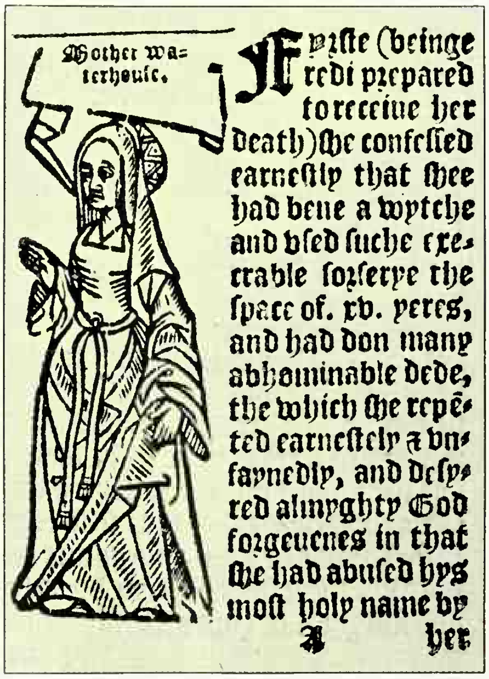


Above left **Calvin, a ruthless persecutor of witches, saw in witchcraft the Devil's alarmed defense against the spiritual progress of the Reformed Church** ***Above right*** **Matthew Hopkins, the Witch-Finder General, charged high fees for his services: he specialized in finding the 'Devil's mark' and extracting confessions** ***Below*** **Extract from a horror pamphlet containing the confession of a notorious witch. These pamphlets helped to create the witch hysteria**



Mother wa-
terhouſe.

Fyrſte (beinge redi prepared to receiue her death) ſhe confeſſed earneſtly that ſhee had bene a wytche and uſed ſuche execrable ſorſerye the ſpace of. xv. yeres, and had don many abhominable dede, the which ſhe repēted earneſtely & unfaynedly, and deſyred almyghty God forgeuenes in that ſhe had abuſed hys moſt holy name by

A her

countries individual witches might be punished from time to time until new legislation under George II made it impossible, but individual cases are not persecutions.

In countries controlled by the Inquisition (Roman or Spanish) there were no major witch-hunts in the period when panic was highest elsewhere. There may have been a continuous stream of trials, and certainly the Inquisitors were not reluctant to punish witchcraft – in the early days of witch-hunting they were the acknowledged experts in the field. In the age of the Reformation, Italy and the Iberian peninsula were more completely under the Church's control than anywhere else, which may account for the fact that they seem to have been more peaceful than elsewhere in this respect.

The Work of the Devil

'Witchcraft' is a word that can have several meanings, and it can be feared and give rise to public panic, for more than one reason. In the Renaissance epoch it is probable that not all those who participated in the persecution of people they thought of as 'witches' attached the same meaning to the word or could have given the same reasons for their fears, but the body of literature which grew up around the subject, including manuals for witch-finders, gives a fairly clear picture of what officials of Church and State understood themselves to be fighting against.

The type of witchcraft which men in authority were trying to stamp out – whether it really existed or not, and whether the general public understood it or not – was something quite different from the furtiv fortune telling and spell peddling, cursin and blessing, which the Church had bee trying to put down since the Dark Ages. Thi was looked upon as sinful, partly becaus many things that witches were believed to b able to do were obviously evil and partl because even their relatively benevolen practices implied disrespect towards Providence and the Church's own ministrations It was almost irrelevant whether the culprit could or could not perform what the claimed, but probably most bishops an their judges thought that they could.

The new witchcraft, discovered an revealed to the world by zealous Inquisitor in the late Middle Ages, was somethin else again. The older kind indeed survived and was taken into and absorbed by th new, but there was one vital new elemen in the situation: witchcraft had come to b recognized as the work of the Devil.

Of course, all sin is the Devil's work in sense, but the Inquisitors, and late Protestant witch-finders, meant somethin altogether more precise. They meant tha the witches (who from this point onward begin to be of both sexes, although women as in folklore, continued to predominate had put themselves consciously under th guidance and command of Satan to work hi nefarious will in the world, while gratifyin depraved desires and ambitions of thei own. Thus it followed that they really di enjoy occult powers, supplied them by thei infernal master; it now became a mark o orthodoxy to believe in witchcraft, and a

The Devil's mark might take many forms, it might even be invisible, but it was a spot somewhere on the body which was insensible to pain

ound of complicity to deny it or express
epticism. Moreover, all witches being
rvants of one master were members of a
uge all-pervading conspiracy. Eventually,
e propagandists were to claim to know
omething about the details of the organiza-
on and by the time when we can reasonably
se the phrase 'witch persecution' associa-
on of one suspect with another was
fficient evidence of guilt.

he Obscene Kiss

he associating together of witches had
ot been prominent in earlier beliefs so far
s we can tell, but was not unknown. The two
nnual occasions when witches are supposed
foregather – Walpurgisnacht (30th April)
nd Hallowe'en (31st October) – are impor-
nt in the folklore of most European coun-
ies and although it is impossible to be
ertain that those parts of folklore which are
levant to witches are not later accretions,
is unlikely. However, the older supersti-
on most clearly involving the assembly of
number of witches is one that the Church
ad earlier tried to suppress as delusory.
his is the story of the witches' ride, recorded
the so-called Canon Episcopi. This
mous document (first referred to c 900 AD)
enounced 'certain wicked women' who
lsely claimed to have ridden by night,
overing immense distances, with 'Diana',
hose servants they were. The suggestion
as that they had dreamed it and that good
hristians ought not to believe that such a
ing could really happen. In later copies
iana changed her name; her best known
iases being 'Herodias', 'Holda-Perchta'
nd 'Dame Habonde'. Until the 15th century
succession of churchmen, lawyers, poets
nd others continued to deny that this lady
xisted or that witches rode with her by
ght. None of them mention broomsticks.
he witches rode on animals, presumably
onstrous. As with other tales of super-
atural journeys, it is very hard to guess
hether in the teller's mind they actually
ew or not. The witches' flying through the
r eventually became an integral part of
e idea of witch assemblies on such occa-
ons as Hallowe'en. Witch-hunters
elieved that it really happened, and the
anon Episcopi was definitely inconvenient.

One thing they knew which Regino of Prüm,
e earliest writer to use the Canon Episcopi,
ertainly did not know, was what happened
at the assemblies. The real leader, of course, was Satan and not Diana. He appeared in the form of an animal – usually a goat – and required his devotees to kiss him under the tail – the '*osculum infame*'. The proceedings also included a sexual orgy. The participants, apart from the Devil, were naked. These details are fairly constant. There might also be some act of conscious blasphemy, but the Black Mass dear to modern magicians does not play a conspicuous part in the picture drawn by the propagandists. The remarkable thing about all these accusations is that they had previously been used to blacken the reputations of heretical sects such as the Waldenses.

In the 13th century, especially in the South of France, a variety of heresies became sufficiently firmly established to require vigorous action on the part of the Church; the Dominican Order and the Inquisition were both founded at this time and for this purpose. By the time that the Albigensians, Waldenses, Picards, Patarenes and so on had been thoroughly crushed, the Church's machinery of repression was stronger and more efficient than ever before, and Inquisitors and preachers had learnt a great deal about the way in which the Devil used dissident groups that fell under his control. By the end of the century it quite suddenly becomes easy to document the idea that he requires everybody who has become his servant, not only heretics, to kiss his hindquarters.

Indeed only one major charge that was useful to witch-hunters appears not to have been used by heresy-hunters. This was the charge that the Devil had physically marked the culprit as one of his own. The Devil's mark might take many forms, it might even be invisible, but it was a spot somewhere on the body which was insensible to pain. This belief differs from those already mentioned in being of very little use as a propaganda smear but useful as *evidence*; it suggested ways of detecting who was and who was not a witch.

This brings us to the subject of witch trials, about which remarkably little is known for certain. In all the countries of Europe, the survival of court records from the period of major persecutions is incomplete and dependent on chance, nor did official court records attempt to give a complete transcript of proceedings. Only occasionally and by accident do we know whether a confession was extracted by torture or not, and we can never hope to know what kind of ordeals were imposed on suspects by lynch mobs, although it is pretty obvious that much of the persecution took that form. The uneven survival of records makes it futile to attempt a statistical analysis of witchcraft cases. In addition to court archives, information about particular trials is sometimes found in general manuals for witch-finders such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* and often occurs in the numerous pamphlets that describe individual witch-hunts.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, was the most influential authority of all on the subject. It spawned a numerous progeny of handbooks, and nowhere else is the witch-hunting temper, in its earlier, pre-Reformation phase, better conveyed. It was the work of two Dominicans, Heinrich Kramer or Institoris, and Jacob Sprenger, natives respectively of the Tyrol and Basel and thus of the same general region, from which nearly all their examples are drawn. Kramer had been active, as Inquisitor, in witch-hunting in the Tyrol, where he had actually been removed from office for excessive zeal. The book was intended to vindicate him as well as to urge the necessity of witch-hunting in general. Pope Innocent VIII in some sense commissioned the work by his bull *Summis Desiderantes* of 1484, in which he speaks of immense harm being caused by supernatural means and Satanic influence; this bull was afterwards quoted as papal endorsement for the authors' views.

The *Malleus*, which ran into 13 editions by 1520, became for Catholics the most authoritative manual available, so that later works tended to appeal to its authority or to that of the bull. It conveyed in fairly developed form the picture of the Satanic witch cult described above; it disposed of the inconvenient Canon Episcopi with the argument that what was a dream and a delusion on one occasion might be true experience on another, and it supplied detailed advice to judges on how to go about examining witches.

Joan of Arc, who was tried long before this, in 1431, was asked whether her angels came to her in the form of naked men and whether she had danced round a tree which was reputed to belong to the fairies. Had she been tried after the *Malleus* and its imitators had gained currency she would

Examination of Witches

Item, there must be great persuasion used to all men, women, and children, to accuse old women of witchcraft . . .

Item, the little children of witches, which will not confess, must be attached (seized); who (if they be craftily handled, says *Bodin*) will confess against their own mothers.

Item, witches must be examined suddenly, and as unawares as possible: the which will so amaze them that they will confess anything, supposing that the devil has forsaken them; whereas if they should first be committed to prison the devil would tamper with them and inform them what to do . . .

Item, if they will confess nothing but upon the rack or torture: their apparel must be changed, and every hair in their body must be shaved off with a sharp razor.

Item, if they have charms for taciturnity, so that they feel not the common tortures and therefore confess nothing: then some sharp instrument must be thrust betwixt every nail of their fingers and toes . . .

Item, at the time of the examination there should be a semblance of great ado, to the terrifying of the witch: and that a number of instruments, grieves, manacles, ropes, halters and fetters, etc., be prepared, brought forth and laid before the examinate, and also that some be procured to make a most horrible and lamentable cry, in the place of torture, as though he or she were upon the rack, or in the tormentors hands: so as the examinate may hear it while she is examined, before herself be brought into the prison; and perhaps she will by this means confess the matter . . .

Item, if she will not yet confess, she must be told that she is detected, and accused by other of her companions: although in truth there be no such matter: and so perhaps she will confess, the rather to be revenged upon her adversaries and accusers.

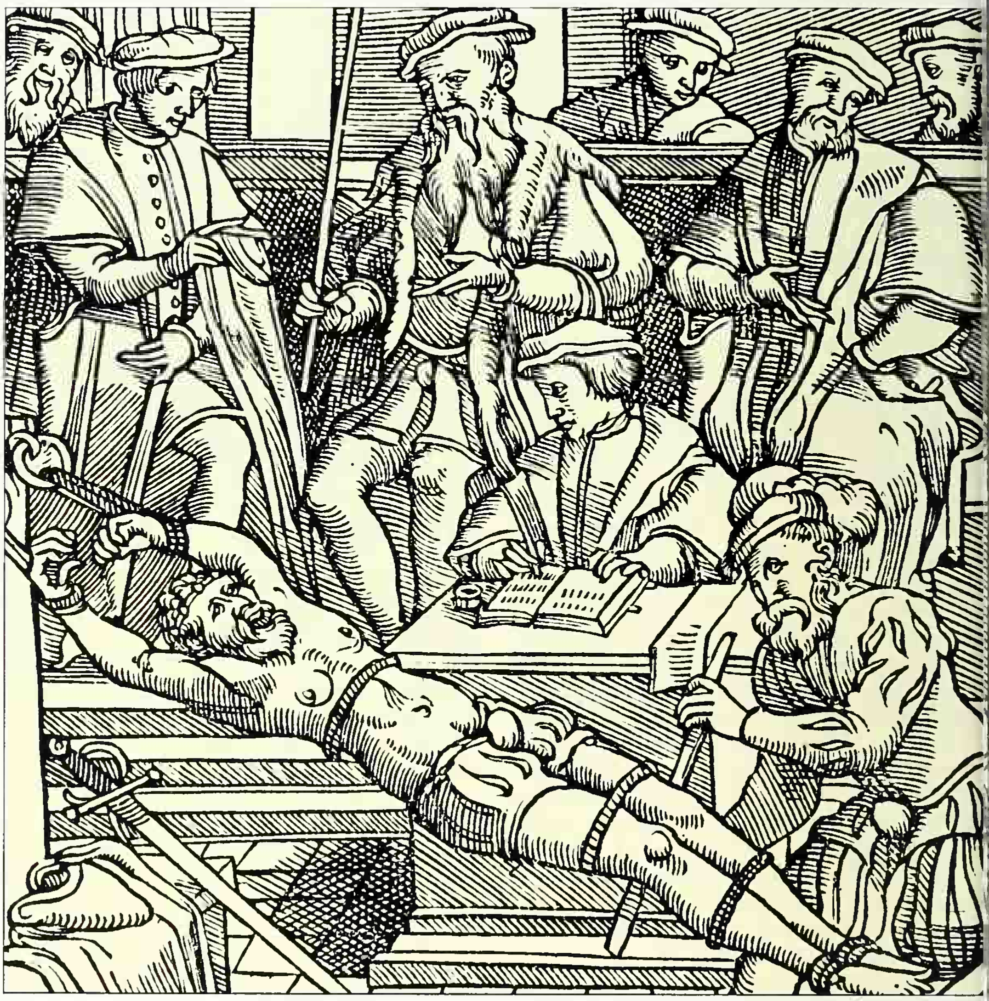
Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*

probably have been asked as a matter of routine whether she believed in witchcraft. 'No' was the wrong answer, and almost proved one was a witch. Questions would follow about her more intimate relations with Satan, as well as any accusations that might emerge from neighbourhood gossip about actual wicked deeds. For witches, as for heretics, there was a presumption of guilt. The only authorized defence against any accusation was that the accuser was motivated by malice, but the accused had no right to know who the accusers were. Torture was highly recommended, even though it was sometimes held that the Devil could counteract its effects by anesthetizing his servants.

The familiar procedures of the Inquisition were of course normally employed on Catholic territory, and were reinforced by the technical advice of Kramer and Sprenger and their later disciples. Elsewhere secular courts with different procedures were sometimes involved. In England confessions were legally useless as evidence and therefore nobody troubled to extract them. The search for the 'Devil's mark' was accordingly more important. In the great panic of the 1640s in Britain, when witch-finders were encouraged by the Roundhead party in the Civil War, men such as the notorious Matthew Hopkins who specialized in locating the mark could charge £1 a head. (See EAST ANGLIAN AND ESSEX WITCHES.)

In a very famous case in Newcastle in 1649 the finder, having scared an hysterical subject out of her wits, stuck his pin into the chosen spot and duly demonstrated that the woman could not feel it. An unusually sceptical Roundhead officer insisted that the test be made again when she was calmer, and saved her. The finder eventually confessed that his method was a fraud.

Although they never had the same official sanction, there were of course other traditional ways of identifying a witch, such as the well-known practice of throwing her, bound, into water and seeing if she would float. If she was a witch, she would, because witches were believed to be preternaturally light. This could also be tested by weighing them against the big Bible in the parish church. This latter test was probably never accepted as evidence in a court; the water-test was occasionally accepted on the Continent, but most references to it are references to attempts to forbid it.

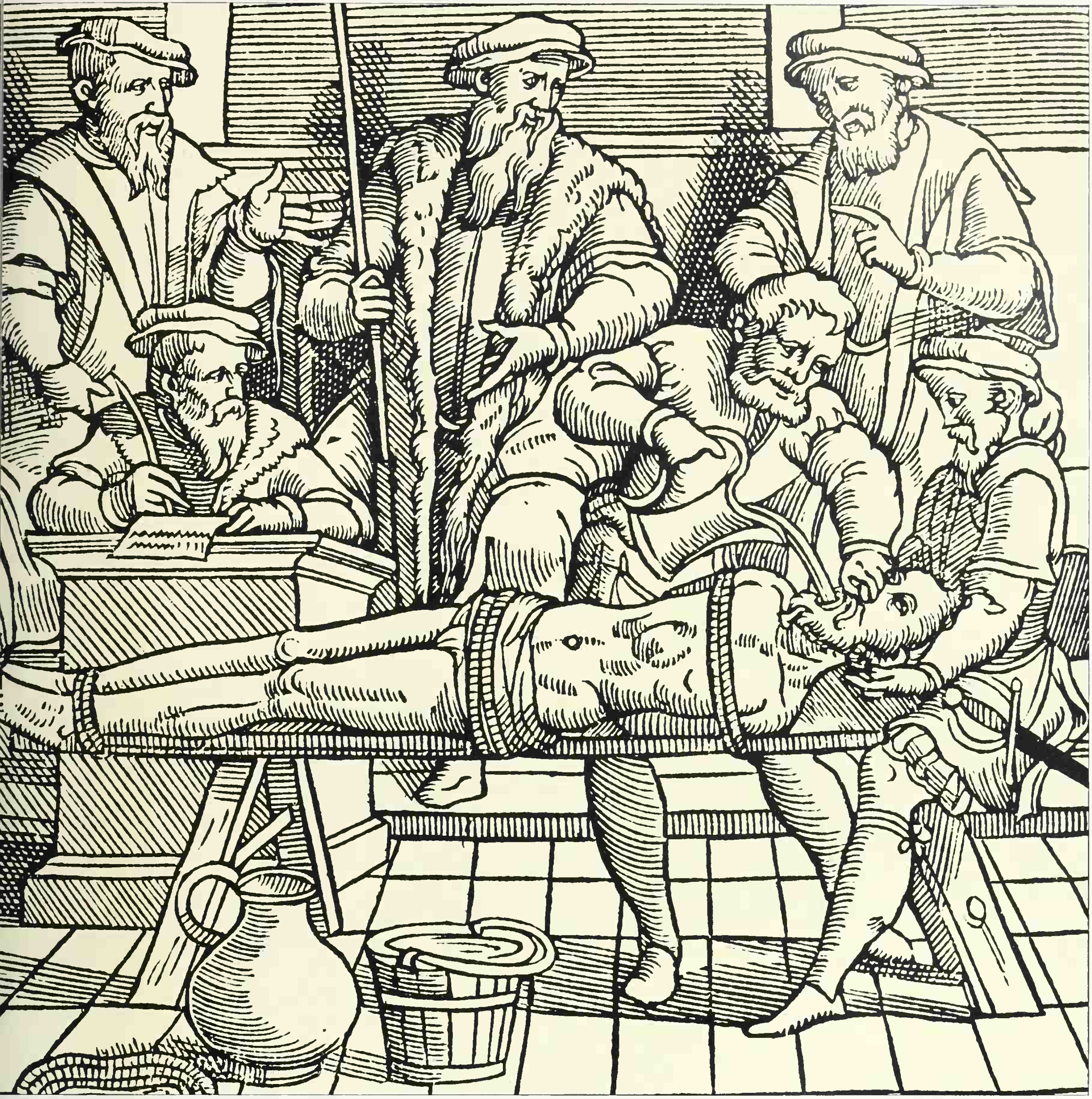


Contagious Hysteria

It seems safe to assume that people accused of witchcraft were rarely given a fair trial, both because of the spreading panic that the accusation inspired and because the accused were usually drawn from the poorer, more downtrodden and unpopular members of the community. What no court records can convey is the atmosphere of suspicion, inside and outside the courtroom. Yet this atmosphere, in which accusations breed further accusations, is the most outstanding feature of the witch persecutions.

It seems likely that popular hysteria was less important in the earlier part of the period and became a major factor later. The early Lutherans were relatively calm and sceptical, though they fell victims to the common dread about the 1580s. Calvin an his followers were zealous persecutors an in Geneva in the 1540s some hundreds wer arrested, and 34 executed in less than a yea Calvin himself urged every severity, claimin that witchcraft was on the increase. H believed that the Devil, alarmed by the progress of the Gospel, was making a specia effort to encourage sorcery in the territorie of the Reformed Churches. Puritans of Calvinistic inspiration were active in the dissemination of horror pamphlets about witchcraft, and the persecution in Presbyteria Scotland was fiercer than in England.

A case could be made, however, tha persecution was most virulent of all, if onl for short periods, in the territories whos political and religious future was uncertain



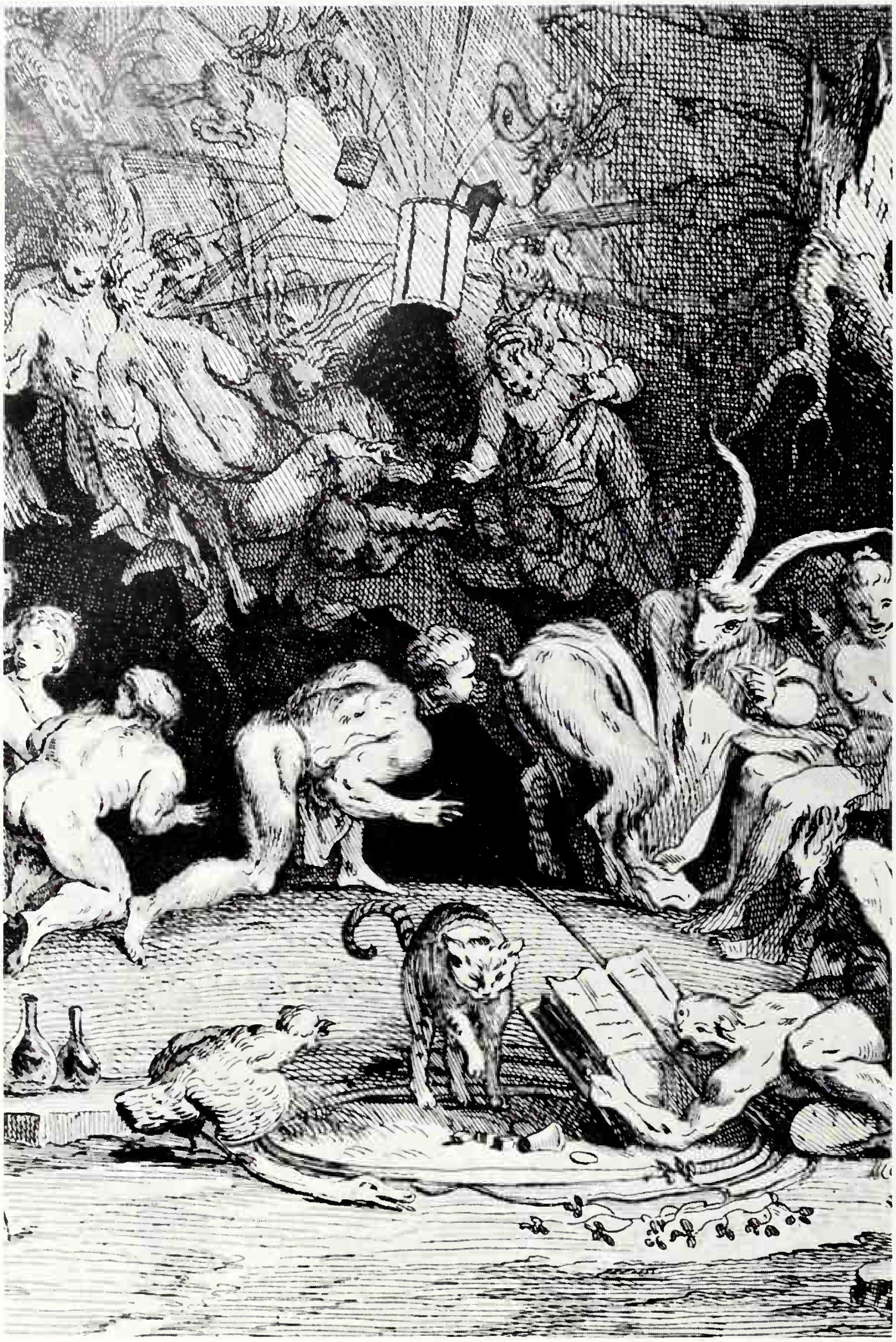
John Webb

arious methods of torture were employed extract confessions from suspected itches *Left* The victim is stretched with pes and a tourniquet is applied to his ighs *Above* Water is poured into the victim's outh to force an admission of guilt

he Prince Bishop of Fulda in Germany ecovered the city from the Protestants in 602 and within five years he had burnt 50 witches, and his witch-finder, Balthasar oss, claimed to have achieved 700 execu- ons in his lifetime. In another threatened rince Bishopric, Bamberg, the decade 623–33 saw around 600 executions and ey had been common enough before (see AMBERG WITCHES). At Quedlinburg, axony, in 1589, where the ruler was Protestant and the population mixed, 133 witches were burnt in one day. These are among the most dramatic figures to be found.

A new element in the post-Reformation phrase is the much greater use of the printing press. Horror pamphlets could help spread hysteria among the general public in areas not previously affected. Some late scares look as if they were wholly stirred up by this means, notably that in Mohra, Sweden, in 1669 (see SWEDISH WITCHCRAFT). The evidence here supplied by children, was a fantastic mixture of standard anti-witch propaganda and local folklore, amounting to the tallest and most unbelievable tale in the whole literature of the subject. It was, however, believed. Three hundred were arrested, many of them children themselves and 100 were punished, a minority receiving the death penalty. There are obvious similarities between this and the best known American scare at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692 (see SALEM WITCHES).

On the other hand, the age that saw an increase in popular witch-baiting literature and an increase in the number of actual executions also saw the beginnings of counter-propaganda. The suggestion that witchcraft was a mere delusion, at one time a dangerous thing to say, was urged by many throughout the 17th century. Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) provoked King James I to write his *Daemonologie* (1597) in reply, but James,



At the witches' sabbath the most notoriou rite was the 'obscene kiss': the Devi supposedly appeared in the guise of a animal, usually a goat, and worshipper were required to kiss him beneath the tail

Radin Times Hulton Picture Library

when investigating witchcraft cases in person, was extremely cautious and sceptical

In the last age of persecution the impetu to persecute came from the common people and judges and officials tried to restrain it All the evidence goes to show that this was late development, and that it was the official ruling and learned classes who were th original instigators of the witch hysteria.

(See also articles on individual witche and witch groups, and on areas of Europe.)

ELLIOT ROS

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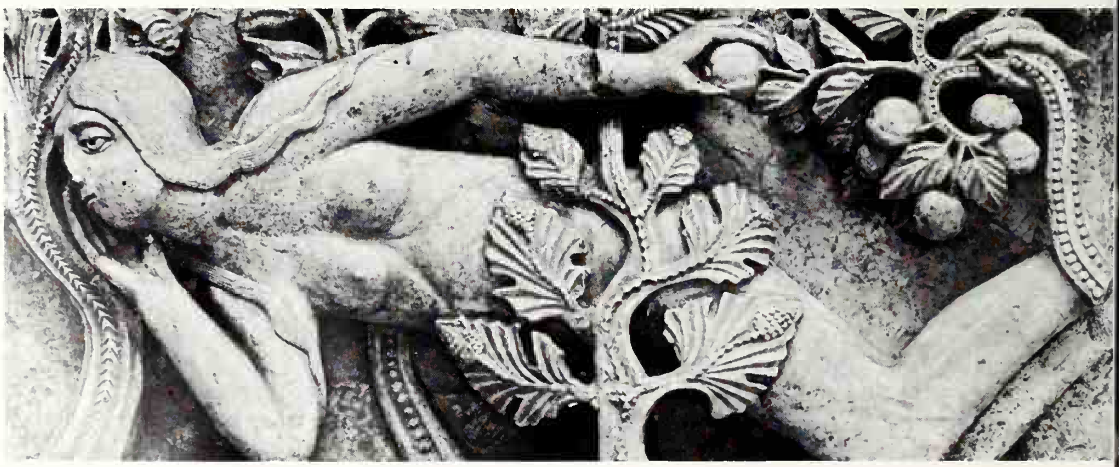
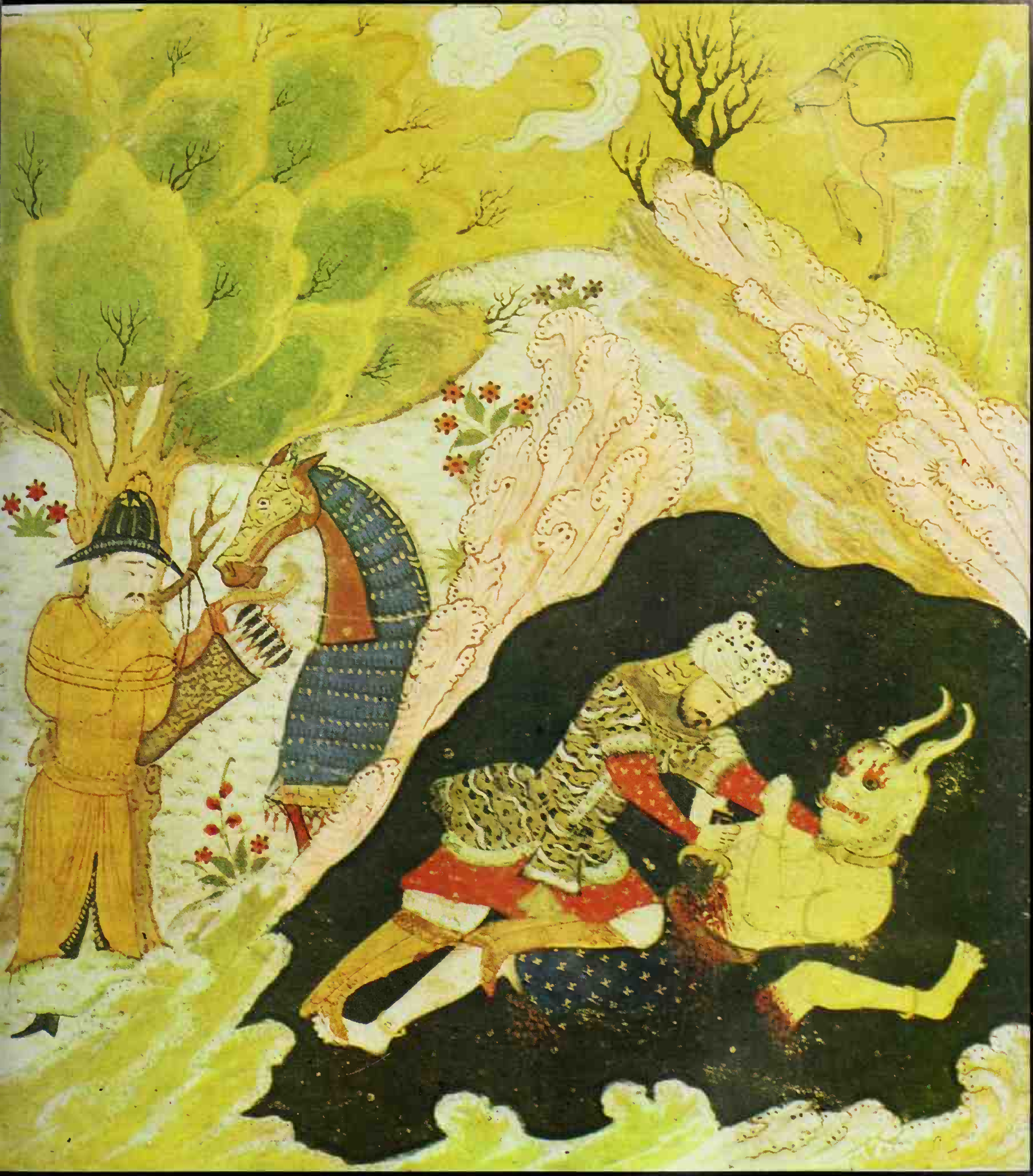
Eve

According to the book of Genesis, the name of the first woman, 'built' by God from one of Adam's ribs to provide him with a mate: her Hebrew name, *Hawwah*, means 'the mother of all living' and her making from Adam's body is the origin of human love: by succumbing to the serpent's temptation and persuading Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, she was held responsible for bringing evil into the world, an example of the myth of the evilness of woman.
See FIRST MAN.





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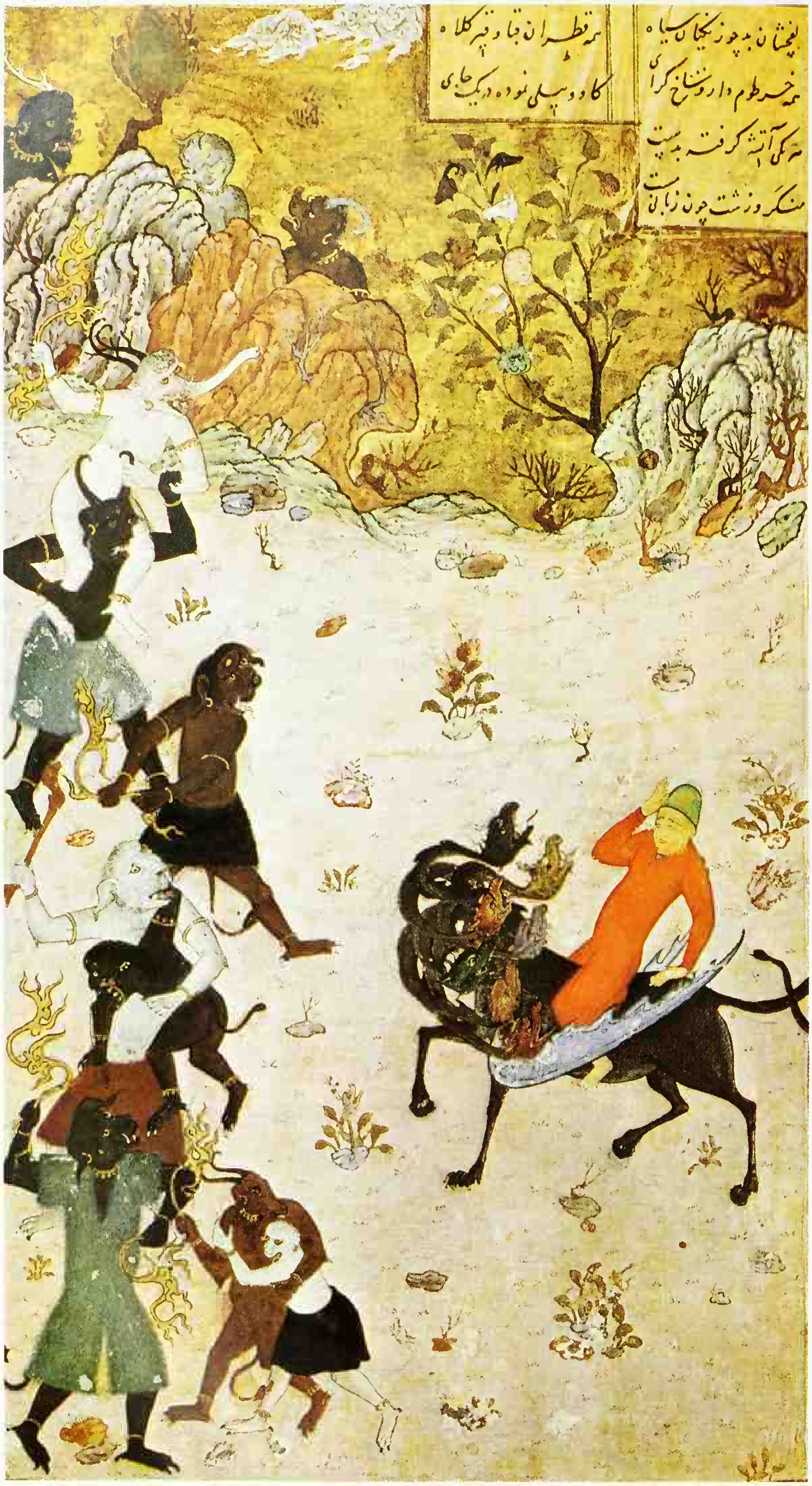
EVIL

The Persian hero Rustem was a great enemy of demons; his most famous exploit was his rescue of the King of Persia by slaying the White Demon within his cavern in the mountains of Tabaristan


همه قطران قبا و قیر کلاه
همه خرطوم دار و شاخ گرای
گاو و پیلی نموده در یک جای
هر یکی آتشی گرفته بدست
منکر و زشت چون زبانی مست

Michael Holford

As Mahan journeyed through the Wilderness of Ghouls he met an army of evil monsters, whereupon his horse turned into a seven-headed dragon. Ghouls were demons of the Mohammedan world who inhabited lonely places and fed on human bodies; they seem to have personified the terrors of the desert: according to Babylonian legend, the appearance of demons was so dreadful that they fled in horror when shown reflections of themselves in giant mirrors: from a manuscript in the British Museum

How evil and its attendant woes of pain an death came into the world has been variousl ascribed to the caprice of the gods, to huma sin and to error. The belief that the Evil On had a hellish host of agents, bent on man destruction, lasted well into modern times i Europe

TWO THINGS have been regarded by man kind down the ages as fundamentally evi pain and death. Naturally these experience have been seen in different ways. In som of the more sophisticated interpretations deeper spiritual evil has been assume behind the physical realities of pain an death: for example, Christian theology ha followed St Paul's pronouncement that 'th sting of death is sin' (1 Corinthians 15.56 However, it is invariably found, on the las analysis, that the concept of evil is essen tially inspired by man's experience of pai and his fear of death. The significance give to sin ultimately depends upon the evalua tion of death in the pattern of huma destiny.

Most religions, consequently, have sough to explain the origin of evil in terms of th cause of pain and death. And they hav generally tried to find this cause in th action of some supernatural being or som primordial happening involving the super natural. Very rarely have pain and deat been regarded as natural features of bio logical life. The most notable exceptions t this general view have been Buddhism an Stoic philosophy. Buddhism, which account for the individual person as a temporar combination of various physical and psy chical entities, the *skandhas*, explains deat as an inevitable disintegration of this com bination. Stoicism, a school of though which originated in Athens, explaine death as physical change occasioned by th physics of the universe, and counselle men to live 'according to Nature', in othe words, to accept and endure the fact tha they were part of a cosmic process tha was not designed to accommodate thei personal likes and dislikes.

The various explanations of the origin o evil advanced by the chief religions can b reasonably grouped under three headings as attributable to divine action; as resultin from cosmic dualism; and as due to sin o ignorance on the part of human beings.

t is invariably found, on the last nalysis, that the concept of evil is ssentially inspired by man's experience f pain and his fear of death

The most notable example of the first view– at evil is the result of divine action – is rovided by the religion of ancient Meso- tamia. The three peoples who lived in this ea and shared in a common cultural tra- tion, namely, the Sumerians, Babylonians d Assyrians, viewed life very pessimis- cally. They believed that the gods had eated mankind to serve them, but that they d withheld immortality from their human rvants. One Sumerian myth told how the d Enki and the goddess Ninmah, after eating mankind, in their sport made rious human freaks such as eunuchs and rren women or diseased and decrepit rsons (see CREATION MYTHS). In other ords, the evils of disease, malformation, cay and death were due to the gods. The ost that the Mesopotamians could hope om their gods by faithful service to them as a long and prosperous life, and defence om demonic attack. Although they believed at their gods had arbitrarily imposed pain d death upon them, the Mesopotamians ever seem to have questioned the justice this.

A similar acceptance of the basic ills of fe as being of divine origin occurs in some her religions, although it does not find ch vivid mythical presentation: ancient ebrew and Greek literature and the Koran rovide examples. This interpretation of the rigin of evil inevitably results when a ligion assigns the creation of the world and ankind to divine agency alone, without ggesting the existence of an evil power that vals that of God or the gods. The problem ere is inherent in any monotheistic inter- retation of the universe, and it finds xpression in varying forms in the great onotheisms of Judaism, Christianity and lam.

he Battle of Good and Evil

hat are known as dualistic interpretations the origin of evil are based upon a more ealistic estimate of man's experience of life an are those of the monotheistic faiths. uch experience seems to show that the orld is a battleground between a good eative force and an evil destructive force, nd that mankind is involved in the struggle oth actively and passively. (See DUALISM.)

The most notable example of a dualistic eligion is Zoroastrianism, which originated Iran from the teaching of Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) who was born about 570 BC, and which became a distinctly presented dualism between Ohrmazd (identified with Ahura Mazdah) and Ahriman (Angra Mainyu). All that is good in the world was attributed to Ohrmazd, with Ahriman responsible for all that is evil, including death, disease, demons and noxious animals. (See AHRIMAN; ZOROASTRIANISM.)

Dualistic interpretations of life have been propounded in some other religions, though not so consistently as in Zoroastrianism. The Hindu gods Vishnu and Shiva were conceived of as being both creators and destroyers of life; in China all existence was explained in terms of the two alternating principles of Yin and Yang (see CHINA). Judaism had come, by the 1st century AD, to account for evil in terms of a modified dualism. This view represented a change from the earlier conception of Yahweh (Jehovah) who, as the sole omnipotent deity, was regarded as the source of both good and evil: 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' asks the pious Job (Job 2.10).

However, probably due to Iranian influences during the Exile in Babylonia in the 6th century BC, the Jews developed a demonology which held that God's good purpose in this world was thwarted by the Devil and his demonic forces. Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian gospels show the prevalence of this dualistic outlook. In the latter, physical and mental disease are attributed to demons, and Jesus is tempted and afflicted by the Devil as the 'Prince of this world'. St Paul called death 'the last enemy' that Christ would destroy, and in early Christian thought death was often identified with the Devil.

The Soul in Prison

A dualistic explanation of the origin of evil of a very different type arose out of the conception of man as an immortal soul incarnated in a physical body, and doomed to inhabit a material world. Where the body was regarded as a corrupting prison of the soul, the origin of evil had to be sought in whatever put the soul in such a direful situation. One of the earliest explanations is Greek, given in the Orphic myth of the devouring of Dionysus-Zagreus, the son of Zeus, by the wicked Titans. From the ashes of these Titans, blasted by Zeus for their crime, mankind arose, having a dual nature, for they were compounded of the evil Titans and the divine Dionysus whom they had eaten. Each human being had, therefore, within his Titanic body a soul, divine of origin and longing to return to heaven. The Orphic mystery cult was designed to free the soul from its contaminating prison and the misery of existence in a material world, and enable it to ascend to the ethereal realm to which it rightly belonged.

Gnosticism, which flourished in the 2nd century AD, in a somewhat similar myth accounted for the present unhappy lot of mankind as being due to the incorporation of a divine soul, fallen from heaven, within a physical body derived of material Nature. Likewise Manicheism, which had a great vogue in Graeco-Roman society, explained the suffering of human existence as resulting from a primeval fall whereby the two contrary principles of the universe became intermixed; these principles were variously designated Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness.

Man's First Disobedience

The third way in which the origin of evil has been explained is in terms of some primordial sin or ignorance on the part of man. The best known and most influential version of the former view is the account of the Fall of Adam as recorded in the book of Genesis (2.4–3.24); it was composed about 900 BC. The writer was concerned to show that death and the miseries of human life were due to the sin of the first parents of mankind. Accordingly he represents Adam and Eve, after their creation by Yahweh, as living an idyllic existence in the garden of Eden. They are immortal; but Yahweh warns them not to eat of the mysterious Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the midst of the garden, for if they do they will surely die. (See FIRST MAN.)

There has been much discussion among scholars about the meaning of this forbidden Tree. For if 'Knowledge of Good and Evil' should mean moral or ethical knowledge, it would be strange that Yahweh should prohibit the first man and woman from acquiring such knowledge, and also threaten them that, if they did acquire such knowledge, they would die. The serpent, however, in tempting Eve, declares that 'God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,

Picturepoint Londo

and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' When they do eat the forbidden fruit, they do not immediately die; instead, they become conscious of their nudity. Their act of disobedience nevertheless has fatal consequences. For when God discovers that they have broken his command, he pronounces Adam's doom: 'In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

There has been much speculation about how this penalty was connected in the mind of the Yahwist writer with eating of the Tree of Knowledge. The most likely interpretation seems to be that to this ancient Hebrew writer 'Knowledge of Good and Evil' meant knowledge of how to reproduce human life. This seems to be implied by the fact that the immediate consequence of eating the forbidden fruit was that Adam and Eve became conscious of their nudity, which meant their sexual potency; it is only after acquiring this knowledge that 'Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived' (Genesis 4.1). Such knowledge was fatal; for the first human pair thus created those who must inevitably replace them.

Whether that was indeed the idea of the Yahwist writer in connecting the Fall of Adam with the mysterious Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil remains uncertain. What is certain is that he traced the origin of death to Adam's disobedience to his Maker's command. With death, as the penalty of that original sin, the Yahwist writer also associated the hard toil of agriculture and the pain of childbirth.

The part of the serpent in bringing these evils upon Adam and Eve must be noticed. In the Genesis story, the serpent is described as 'more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made' and it is represented as having the ability to speak. However, it is not identified with the Devil, as it was in later Hebrew and Christian thought; for instance, in the Wisdom of Solomon: 'By envy of the devil death entered into the world.' The part played by the serpent in the fall of Adam was possibly inspired by the serpent in the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh. In this celebrated poem the hero is robbed of his immortality by a serpent, an idea doubtless rived from a primitive belief that the ser-nt, by sloughing off its old skin, rejuve-ated itself (see GILGAMESH).

The story of the Fall of Adam exercised a rofound influence on Christian thought bout the origin of evil. It inspired St Paul formulate the concept of original sin, hich became one of the basic tenets of the ctrine of salvation. Christianity, accord-gly, taught that death and all the other s which afflict men and women are due, imarily, to their partaking in the original n of Adam. Furthermore, it taught that ankind add to this inherited penalty by eir own actual sins, making themselves en more deserving of the wrath of God. owever, since Christianity inherited the emonology of 1st-century Judaism, it has so associated the origin of evil very closely ith the Devil, sometimes tracing evil back the Devil as a fallen angel named Lucifer, ho revolted against God before the cre-tion of the world (see DEVIL).

norance or Error

udaism and Christianity, therefore, both nd the origin of evil in human sin, but with ome dualistic suggestion of a pre-cosmic evolt of an angel or angels against God. ther religions have also traced evil back to an; however, they assign it to his igno-ance or error, not to his disobedience to his aker's command. Hinduism and uddhism are the two great religions that ccount for evil in this way.

According to a view that first finds expression about 600 BC in the Hindu *Upanishads*, through a primeval ignorance (*avidya*) human beings have made two fatal mistakes: they have taken the phenomenal world, that is, the world apprehended by the senses, as reality; and they cling to existence in this world, believing that they are individual selves (*atman*). But behind this phenomenal world is the true Reality or Brahman, which is the source and ground of all being (see BRAHMAN). By clinging to the phenomenal world as reality and involving themselves with it, men become subject to the process of *samsara*, a ceaseless process of birth and death, with all its consequent pain and suffering. Deliverance can be achieved only when the individual, by a vigorous mental and physical discipline, achieves effective detachment from desire to live in the phenomenal world and realizes his identity with Brahman.

Buddhism insists even more emphatically on the suffering and pain of human existence as constituting the essence of evil. In the legend of the Buddha, the beginning of the quest for enlightenment comes when the young Gautama is first confronted with the brute facts of disease, old age and death. He is represented as telling his disciples: 'Before my enlightenment... I thought: Into wretchedness, alas, has this world fallen; it is born, grows old, dies, passes away and is reborn. But from this pain it knows no escape, from old age and death. When indeed from this pain shall an escape be known, from old age and death?... And as I duly reflected there came the comprehension of full knowledge: it is when there is becoming (or desire to be) that there is rebirth...'

A sequence of causes is then traced out, ending with the original cause which is avidya (ignorance), meaning thereby ignorance of the true constitution of things. Buddhism, although it differs from Hinduism by rejecting the idea of a 'self', has also been concerned to offer a way of deliverance from the suffering of an unceasing cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and of achieving Nirvana, which is the negation of the phenomenal world.

Although evil has been principally identified with pain and death, there has also been an ancient and widespread disposition to associate it with the violation of cosmic order. The idea of a cosmic order appears already in ancient Egypt in the third millennium BC, in the concept of *maat* ('truth' or 'justice'), with the maintenance of which the sun god Re is identified (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). A similar conception appears in ancient India as *rta*, in Iran as *arta*, and in Greece as *themis* or *logos*. This notion of a cosmic order had its social aspect: it followed that the established pattern of social relations and behaviour was regarded as sacrosanct and its violation correspondingly heinous. However, in accounting for the origin of evil the religions of mankind have generally concentrated on explaining the causes of pain and death.

S.G.F.BRANDON

VIL SPIRITS

N THE EARLIEST BELIEFS, Nature's domain as peopled by elemental spirits, each aving jurisdiction over a specific area of atural phenomena and supplying the otive power that induces change (see ANI-ISM). The gradual evolution of elemental pirits, which were capable of both good nd evil, into good spirits and bad spirits, nd finally into demons and angels, was the roduct of ages of slow development.

There was from the beginning a tendency o regard demons as playing a somewhat mbivalent role. Although extremely pow-rful in their own right, they could be com-elled to submit to the orders of a magician. he problem was further complicated by he fact that the gods of conquered peoples ended to be incorporated among the emons of the conquerors.

Historically the development of a sophis-icated creed of demonism, with a clear dif-erentiation between the forces of good and vil, light and darkness, coincided with the mancipation of social institutions from ubsistence economy. With the growth of he concept of gods and devils, the minor emons of earlier stages of belief tended to ccupy a subordinate position in the dia-olic hierarchy, at the same time retaining ost of their distinctive features.

***bove left* The close likeness to the fearsome oddess Kali is apparent in this representation f the Indian demon Kalbhairab**

It was characteristic of demons in the East that they favoured lonely sites, particularly deserts, from which they emerged in truly terrifying hordes. The appearance of an army of demons that haunted the deserts of Assyria, said to be comprised of 'warriors, destroyers, vampires, phantoms and ghosts', was so dreadful that when shown their own reflections in giant mirrors, placed on the walls of cities, they fled in terror from the scene.

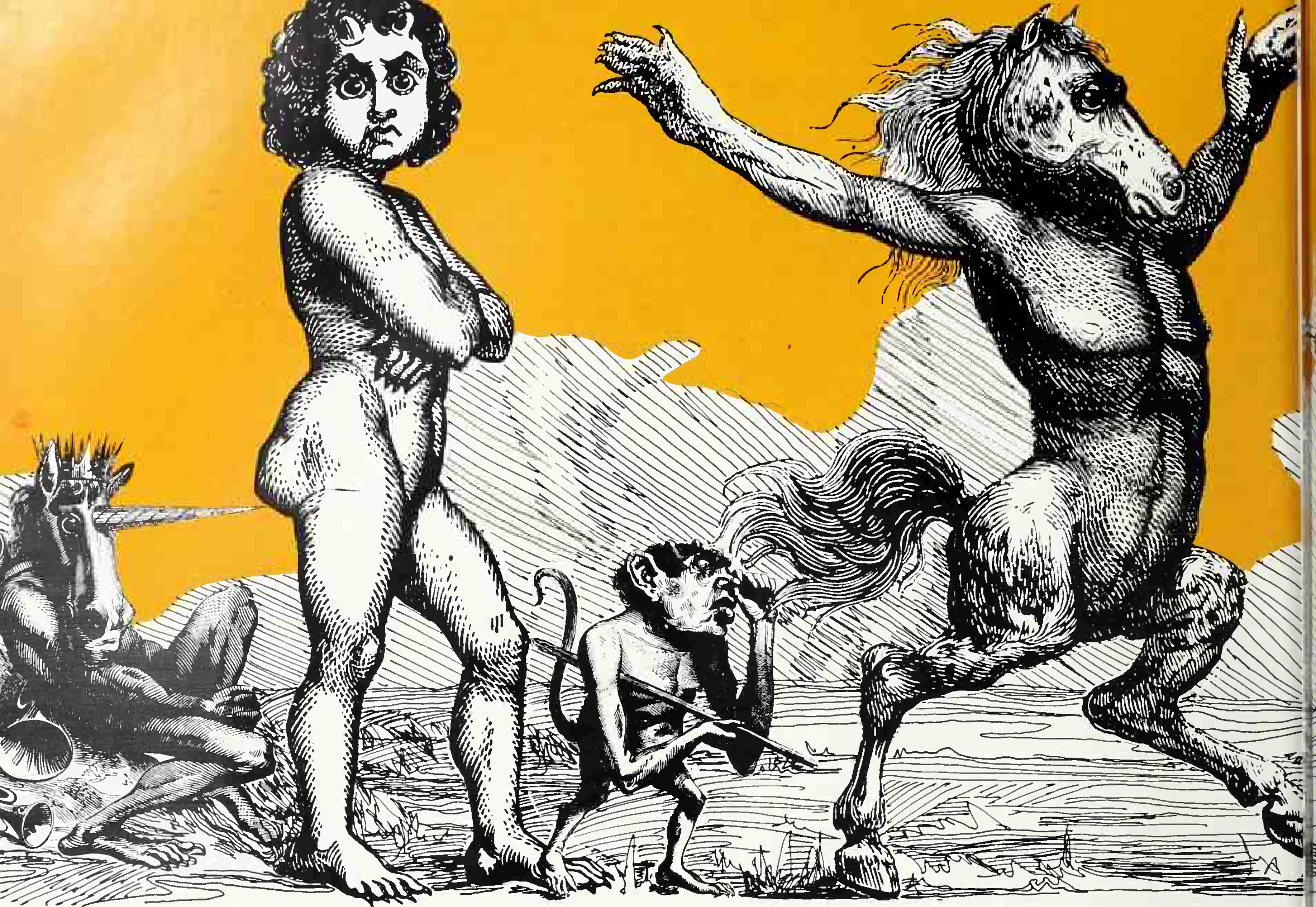
The Master of Evil

During classical times dualism survived among the Greeks; their *daimon*, later in history to be transformed into the more familiar demon of Christian mythology, combined good and evil elements. The ancient Jews shared the general terror of the demons of darkness, which is reflected in the words of Psalm 91: 'Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.' In the earlier period of their history, before the development of the idea of Satan (see DEVIL), the imagination of the Jews peopled the deserts with malevolent spirits; these were later reduced to a minor role as servants of the Master of Evil.

The emergence of Satan transformed demonology into a major influence in the affairs of mankind; for the pre-eminence allocated to the supreme Devil created the climate for the persecution of witchcraft. The Church became dominated by the conviction that Satan was intent upon making himself God's equal and that he sought ceaselessly to undermine God's kingdom by the corruption and destruction of humanity. That Satan was a truly formidable opponent is evident from the words of the eminent Johann Weyer, written in the 16th century: 'Satan possesses great courage, incredible cunning, superhuman wisdom, the most acute penetration, consummate prudence, an incomparable skill in veiling the most pernicious artifces under a specious disguise, and a malefic and infinite hatred towards the human race, implacable and incurable.'

The presence of a supreme spirit of evil in society's midst was a factor hardly conducive to emotional stability. Malevolent demons were held responsible for every mishap to which flesh was heir. Even the ordinary temptations of the flesh, the inevitable occupational hazard of anchorite and hermit, were laid at the door of demons who were believed to feel affronted by chastity and piety. The 12th-century English saint Godric, after being all but seduced by a demon disguised as a naked woman, was hurled from his bed and thrashed with a stool. An unexpectedly sensitive demon, however, which attacked the Holy Man of Farne, withdrew in terror after being denounced in most vituperative terms by that sharp-tongued saint.

Even more troublesome were those agents of demonic lust, the incubi and succubi who harrassed men and women under cover of sleep (see INCUBUS AND SUCCUBUS).



Evil spirits took an immense variety of shapes, as shown by these illustrations from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*: from left to right, Amduscias, who gave infernal concerts on the trumpet; Lucifer; Ronwe, who gave knowledge of languages; Orobas, grand prince of Hell; Ukobach, inventor of fried foods; Xaphan, who fanned the furnaces of Hell; and Eurynome, prince of death

St Augustine in his *De Civitate Dei*, written in the 5th century AD, had drawn attention to their activities in the following terms: 'It is a widespread belief that sylvans and fauns, commonly called incubi, have frequently molested women, sought and obtained coitus from them.'

An incubus was a demon that copulated with women, while a succubus had sexual intercourse with men. It was generally admitted that there were few nunneries free of the ravages of the former, while the latter were active among communities of monks. We have it upon the authority of Albertus Magnus (1206-80) that 'there were places in which a man can scarcely sleep at night without a succubus accosting him.' Learned theologians debated long and thoughtfully such points as how a demon, which was by definition sexless, could indulge in sexual intercourse. After earnest consideration it was decided that a demon had the power to utilize a corpse for this purpose or could create a body from the very air itself.

Demonic Specialists

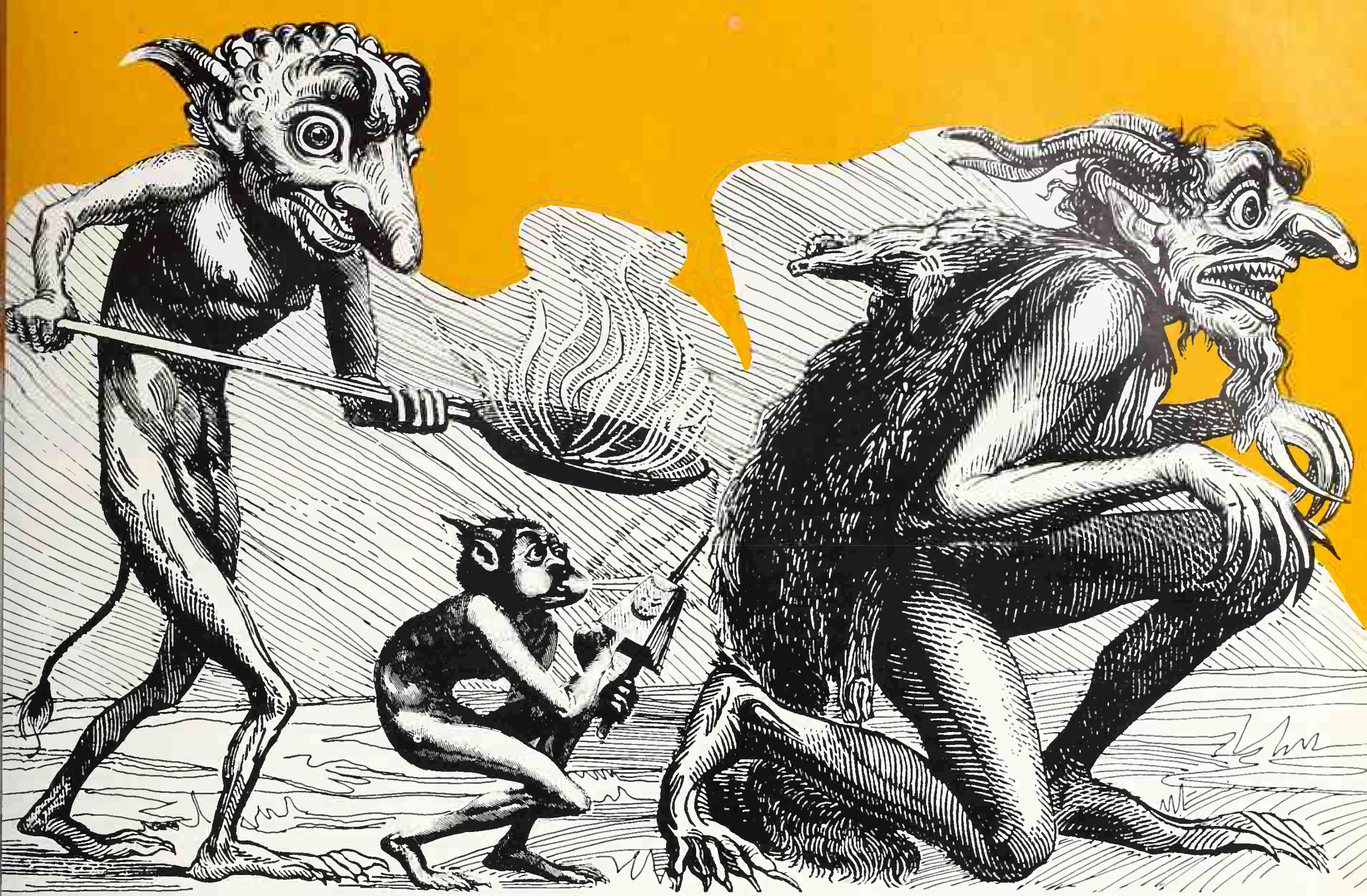
There were dire physical as well as moral consequences in sleeping with incubi and succubi, for not only was the sin classed as bestiality but the offspring were likely to be monsters. Despite such dangers there was considerable interest in this specific type of demonic activity and it is said that in 1468 an enterprising brothel keeper of Bologna staffed his entire establishment with succubi. These female demons had their own separate organization within the satanic hierarchy under an arch-demoness, Princess Nahemah. The penalty reserved by the heavenly powers for those who trafficked with demons was an eternity in hell, a domain of fiery torments under the ministration of hordes of demons skilled in the art of inflicting perpetual pain.

Opposing the satanic host was an army of angels organized in hierarchies, who from the general state of affairs would seem to have been remarkably ineffective. As for the number and variety of demons, these grew ever more powerful as Christianity matured. Their numbers were greater than the sands of the desert, amounting to as many as 7,405,926; according to one demonologist they were divided into 12 classes whose functions were so organized as to cover every aspect of human suffering, ranging from hunger to death. According to another, demons were grouped under the headings of fire, air, earth and water, with subterranean devils and shadows thrown in for good measure.

The demonologist Binsfeld in 1589 compiled a list of devils to cover each of the seven deadly sins: Lucifer was the devil o pride, Mammon the devil of avarice Asmodeus of lechery, Satan of anger Beelzebub of gluttony, Leviathan of env and Belphegor of sloth. Another write increased the number of groups to ten divided into fates, poltergeists, incubi an succubi, marching hosts, familiars, nightmare demons, demons constructed fron human semen, deceptive demons, clea demons and those who deceived witche into the belief that they flew to the sabbath

Demons were allocated specific territories, the north being under Zimmar, th south under Gorson, the east unde Amayan and the west Goap. In additio there was a parliament of devils and a ambassadorial court which dispatched diabolical emissaries to every land. When th army of demons went on parade the whol earth trembled from the thunder of th march past of infernal dukes riding on th backs of griffins, winged dogs and phanton dromedaries screaming blasphemies i Egyptian. It is on record that the chief o the demons during the course of a conversation with three monks declared: 'Th strength of our army is such that if all th Alps, their rocks and glaciers were divide among us none would have more than a pound's weight.'

This was the substance of accepted belie in devils in the 16th century held by th greatest intellects in Europe. Even b medieval standards the situation woul have been ludicrous were it not for the fac that vast numbers of human beings wer



Prodnose Studio

eing driven almost mad by terror. In ppearance most demons, and especially atan, were truly horrifying. As masters of isguise even ordinary demons could ssume an infinite variety of shapes, as is ndicated in the 14th century miracle play *he Passion of St Quentin*:

Smooth Devils, Horned Devils,
Sullen Devils, Playful Devils,
Shorn Devils, Hairy Devils,
Foolish Devils,
Devils, Devilesses, and Young Devils,
All the offspring of devildom,
Come from your devilish tricks

For protection against the hellish host here were in existence a number of time-onoured charms and similar devices of roven efficacy, including holy water, the ign of the cross, firelight, spittle, bread, alt, objects of iron, herbs, amulets and ncantations, not to mention the rude ges-ure known as the 'fig'. Every symbol that ould possibly be equated with the creative mpulse might be utilized against an enemy vho was in essence the spirit of corruption.

Raising the Devil

nevitably perhaps, a number of people, disappointed by the inadequacies of piety and rayer, were tempted to turn to the Devil in he hope of obtaining a better guarantee of eward than that offered by the Deity. From such an attitude developed attempts o summon demons from the infernal regions by the aid of spells. Using books of magical directions called grimoires, the magician endeavoured to bind the demon temporarily to his will. There were certain rituals to which even the great Lords of Darkness, Lucifer and Beelzebub, had no alternative but to respond. The magician, armed with a magic sword, prepared a ritual circle and uttered words of occult power. In one ritual it was necessary to utter the nine mystic names: Eheieh, Iod, Tetragrammaton Elohim, El, Elohim Gibor, Eloah V a-Daath, El Adonai Tzabaoth, Elohim Tzabaoth and Shaddai. Following the ceremony the demon could be dismissed with the words: 'I am pleased and contented with thee, Prince Lucifer, for the moment. Leave thou in peace now, and go in quiet and without trouble. Do not forget our pact or I shall blast thee with my wand. Amen.'

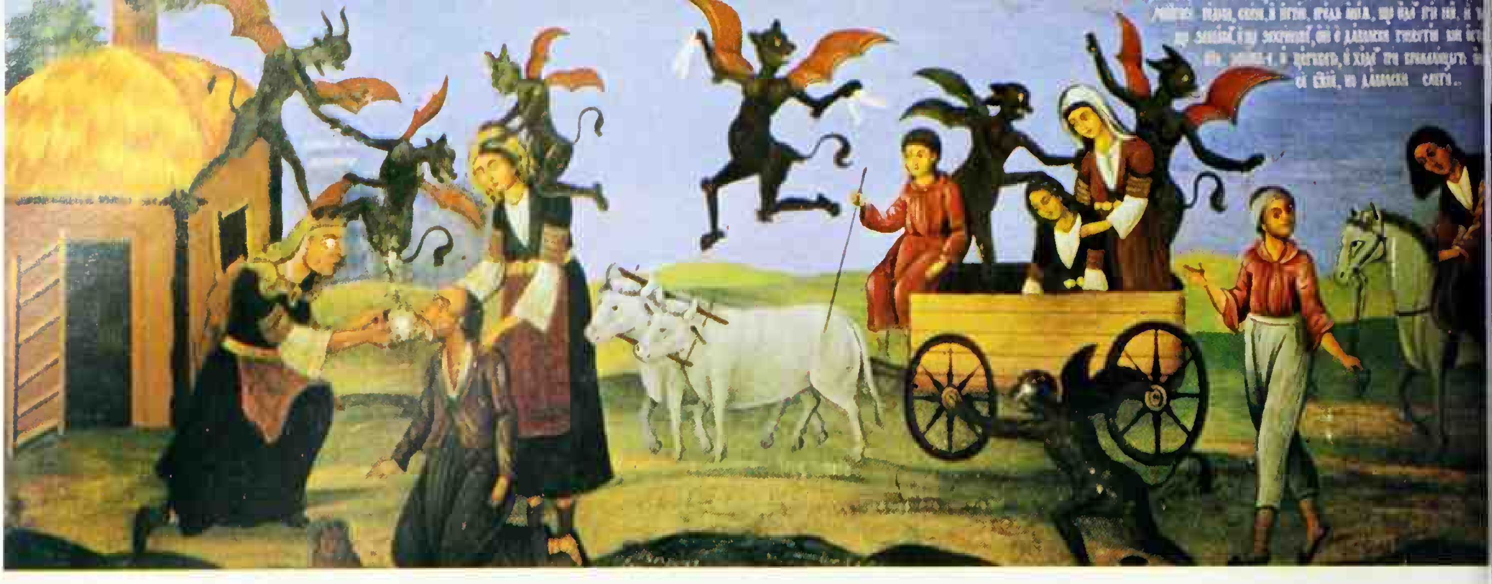
The certainty that demons were always ready in waiting for the summons of the magician is attested by the old legend describing how the actor Edward Alleyn, after invoking Mephistopheles during a 17th-century performance of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, discovered a real devil reeking of brimstone upon the stage. This experience impelled him to abandon the theatre once and for all and to embark upon good works which included the founding of Dulwich College.

The age of diabolic domination was essentially one of social disarray and general anxiety which the demonologists, whether from conscious or unconscious motives, exploited to the full. Everywhere lurked the spirits of evil, terrifying the more neurotic among the community. Mankind stood perpetually on guard against the attempts of demons to penetrate the human body by one of its natural orifices and to assume diabolical possession. Catholics were well aware of the dangers from the warning given by Gregory the Great, in his description of the awful situation of the nun who had absentmindedly eaten a lettuce without crossing herself. Thus exposed, she fell victim to a demon who leaped down her throat. Protestants were equally wary but sought protection more in prayer and by the rejection of impure thoughts.

Demons often opened their attacks by buffetings and beatings or by obsessing the victim with abstractions that left his soul temporarily undefended. Diabolic possession was usually manifested by writhing, foaming at the mouth, twitching, grotesque grimacing, insensitivity and occasionally paralysis. Another remarkable feature was the tendency for the victim to answer in French questions addressed to him by the exorcist in Latin. These disturbing symptoms lay completely beyond the comprehension of medical men of the time and were automatically ascribed to the Devil.

Beatings and Fumigations

To drive out the unwanted demon was a task requiring the trained specialist in exorcism, although there were occasions when a gentle admonition plus a sprinkling of holy water appear to have been sufficient. There was even an exceptional 17th-



In this wall painting from a monastery in Bulgaria, travellers visiting a witch are escorted by gleeful demons: according to medieval belief devils lay everywhere in wait to snatch unwary souls

century case in which an extremely sensitive demon retreated after being sneered at by the exorcist as a 'ninny, a drunkard and a sow'. In the main, however, demons were not so easily intimidated and every device of the exorcist's art was required to accelerate their expulsion. It was not uncommon for a group of Protestant divines to conduct a mass prayer meeting at the bedside of the writhing demoniac, while furious arguments and lengthy dialogues took place between the indwelling demon and the exorcist, the former often revealing the most intimate details of himself and his activities, including his name. Devils were expelled by forcing the possessed man or woman to inhale some vile-smelling concoction, or by beatings with sticks. One case is on record in which a demon was drawn out of the victim through the nostrils.

In an age when the whole of society seemed beset by the forces of hell it was inevitable that the Devil's agents upon earth, the witches, should have come under heavy attack; almost every type of natural calamity was laid at their door, particularly the onset of diseases, the sinking of ships at sea, storms and bad harvests. It was accepted theology that a witch attained her powers by a compact with Satan; and as a penalty for forswearing her immortal soul and imperilling the human race there existed no logical altemative but to kill her. The pact with Satan became a standard charge against magical practitioners throughout Western Europe, but although it was rumoured that no less than seven Popes had traded their souls for temporal delights, there is no record of their prosecution for sorcery.

Familiar Spirits

The pact, which might be negotiated by either Satan or one of his subordinates, was signed in the witch's blood and ratified by the simple expedient of a bout of sexual intercourse, following which the contractee became bond slave to the Devil for the remainder of her short life. The next stage was for the witch to be supplied with a minor demon as a personal familiar; he had the dual task of keeping watch over her on Satan's behalf and carrying out the diabolical missions which she entrusted to him.

The familiar assumed all manner of guises to deceive the authorities, including that of rabbit, sparrow, cat, dog, goat and chicken. One woman possessed as her imp a cat of brilliant blue. In the St Osyth witch trial of 1582 the accused, Ursula Kempe, admitted to maintaining four imps, two he-cats called Titty and Jack, a black lamb called Tyffin and a toad called Pigin. The familiar was fed with blood from the witch's supernumerary nipples, and it was the finding of these, together with certain spots on the body insensitive to pain known as Devil's marks, that so often led to the witch's downfall and death. The unfortunate animal familiar was usually burned. A case is on record in which a familiar actually claimed to be the prophet Daniel, and another in which it materialized as a bishop vomiting streams of fire. The difficulty of deciding whether such phantoms were demons or ordinary workaday ghosts was further complicated by the opinion then current that ghosts were no more than devils in disguise.

In those many cases in which the Devil assumed human shape, he commonly took the form of a man dressed in black, who from the general description might well have been a Puritan divine. One man in black was active in the educational field, trading degrees in divinity for human souls; his clients, it appeared afterwards, committed suicide. In Scotland the man in black was described as 'sometimes hairy and grim and sometimes merely clad in black clothes and with cloven feet'.

The overrunning of most of Europe by hordes of men in black, witches and familiars, incubi and succubi, engaged the earnest attention of the most eminent minds of the day, including Jean Bodin, Nicholas Remy, Francesco Maria Guazzo of Milan and Pierre de Lancre (see BASQUE WITCHCRAFT). On the other side of the argument were a few brave men who were, intellectually speaking, far in advance of their times, including Bishop Hutchinson of England, Robert Calef of New England and, most important of all, Balthasar Bekker, a Dutch clergyman who strove to demonstrate that the idea of a personal Devil was no more than an assumption. Opposition to orthodox opinion was not undertaken lightly in the witch-hunting days, since i led almost automatically to the stake, and the number of anti-demonists remained pitifully small.

Indeed it was not until the 18th century that mankind had matured sufficiently to shake off the influence of the Devil and his hordes, and this was due as much to a general reaction against religious dogmatism as to any conversion to new ways o thought. For yet a further century Satan played a prominent role in religious doctrine, although by now he had been divested of his retinue of minor demons and the phantom rabbits, demonic dogs and diabolical toads were seen no more. Hell too remained long in vogue until outmoded by the greater horror of manmade warfare.

As for the victims of diabolical possession these still remain in our midst, although the regular diagnosis of their disturbances as due to paranoiac fantasies has robbed their visions of much of their former glamour. There is very little difference in essence between the phantom cat seen by the so-called victim of Jane Wenham, the last woman to be charged with witchcraft in England, and the modern hallucinatory experiences of elves, dwarfs and other phantoms under the drug LSD, as described by R. E. L. Masters and Jean Houston in their book *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* (1967). In one case cited a victim described how: 'something was there all right. Something coming for me from a distant and empty horizon – and there loomed before me a devastating horror, a cosmic diamond cat. It filled the sky, it filled all space...' (See also EXORCISM; FAMILIARS; PACT)

ERIC MAPLE

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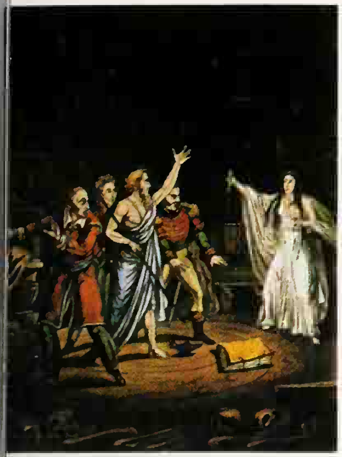
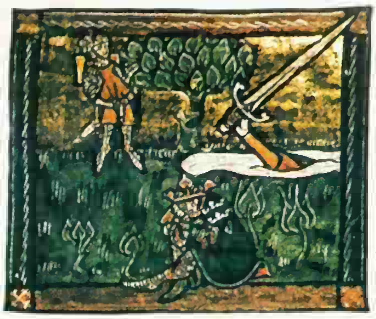


Evocation

In magic the summoning of evil spirits and on occasion the Devil himself: by performing rituals and reciting magic formulae, the magician tried to cause demons to appear and to impose his will on them: precautionary measures were taken to protect the magician from attack by the spirit.
See INCANTATION; MAGIC.



British Museum

Excalibur

The enchanted sword of King Arthur: as a youth Arthur proved his right to kingship by drawing Excalibur out of a great stone; in later stories Arthur obtained his magic sword from the Lady of the Lake, and at his death ordered Sir Bedivere to return the sword by throwing it into the water; also called Caliburnus. Excalibur is probably connected with another magic sword, *Caladbolg*, which belonged to the Irish hero Fergus.
See ARTHUR.

ogressive rigidity and withdrawal from society s marked the history of this Nonconformist ct. The Brethren may not join a trade union, o not vote, shun entertainments and may even e called upon to leave husband or wife

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

HE CHRISTIAN SECT known as the Exclu- ve Brethren today has a significant follow- ng, not only in Britain but in America – articularly in the industrial areas of the astern states and on the west coast, and n Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. he Brethren trace their origins to the same ndividuals who founded the better known ovement of 'Plymouth' or 'Open' Brethren. he earliest Brethren came together in the ate 1820s, when a number of devout Angli- an clergymen, candidates for ordination nd laymen became steadily convinced that he ecclesiastical organization of the Church of England lacked all scriptural, and ll divine, warrant. The clergy in this group bandoned their orders and the attempt was nade to restore the simple and, as they saw t, non-sectarian and non-denominational fe of the earliest Christians. Although most f the early members were Englishmen, it vas in Dublin that the movement first made tself known. Only somewhat later, when ome of the founders had returned to England, and from their meeting hall in Plymouth had begun to evangelize the sur- ounding districts, did the name 'Plymouth Brethren' come into being.

The movement was intensely evangelical nd accepted a fundamentalist interpreta- ion of Scripture, including belief in the econd advent (the second coming of Christ). he members rejected both doctrinal tests of ellowship and formal leadership, in parti- ular disavowing any form of professional ninistry. Liturgical practice was deliberately imple, and the principal ritual was the reaking of bread' at the common table, to vhich all who shared a Christian life could ome. The leaders were convinced evangel- sts and they undertook, sometimes at their wn expense, missionary work in Mesopo- amia and in France, Switzerland and Germany, as well as in Britain.

The attempt to maintain an 'open table' t which Brethren were prepared to offer 'fellowship with all believers', as one of the early principals, John Nelson Darby, put it in 1836, proved more difficult than the Brethren had imagined. In the course of a few years there were those among them who wanted to define just what principles a 'believer' must necessarily accept, and just what was to be regarded as heresy. Darby himself came to lead the demand for clearer formulation of true beliefs, particularly after he discerned 'heresies' in the teaching of Benjamin Wills Newton, the leader at Plymouth, whom he also accused of behaving like a cleric in relation to the congregation of Brethren there. In 1845 Darby established a fellowship consisting only of those who accepted the Christian teaching that he endorsed, and who refused all dealings with outsiders. This action, and the rivalry between Newton and Darby, produced the first division of the Brethren. The 'open' Brethren continued to admit to their services and their communion table Christians who had not relinquished other Church affiliations, provided that they were fundamentalist Protestants. The 'closed' or 'exclusive' Brethren admitted only those who abandoned all other allegiances and all teachings other than those defined by Darby.

The two major branches of Brethrenism grew from this schism, the Exclusive Brethren or Darbyites dating their existence from this time. Abandoning the old interdenominational fellowship, the Exclusives became increasingly withdrawn. They came to emphasize the importance of their own distinctive teachings and rejected not only Christian fellowship, but any type of social intercourse with those who were not members of their meetings. Many assemblies of Brethren in London and the north of England became Exclusive, whilst those in the west country, where the influence of the two Bristol leaders, George Müller and Henry Craik, was strong, remained open fellowships. Nominally each side rejected all authority, but each had its own informal but well-recognized 'leading Brethren'.

Darby increasingly emphasized the importance of keeping apart from those who held false doctrines and this became the central issue for Exclusives as they adopted an increasingly sectarian position. As the great architect of distinctive Exclusivist theology, Darby was also the arbiter of disciplinary procedures within the sect; but all was done in the name of opposition to established ecclesiastical hierarchies, which were – and are still – referred to as 'system'. In fact, the Exclusive Brethren themselves evolved a much tighter internal pattern of control than any of the major Churches.

Exclusives came to believe that the truth about 'the Church' (with which they identified themselves) had been recovered by Darby. This was, of course, the spiritual body of the Church referred to in Scripture, not the apostate Church of England, much less the Church of Rome. Since Darby devoted himself to reformulations of biblical exposition and continued to develop new symbolic and allegorical interpretations of biblical events, the Brethren came to accept the idea that the truth was continually being 'opened up' to the Church through its faithful leading Brethren. Although these Brethren did not claim any special spiritual status, the idea of continuing revelation has persisted among Exclusives to the present day.

God's Plan for the Church

The need for the Church to be separate from the world was a thesis given repeated allegorical justification in Darby's distinctive interpretation of the Bible, which came to be known as 'Dispensationalism'. Interestingly, Darby urged that the Church of the saints was not part of God's original redemptive plan, since God's promise was to Israel, and 'Israel' was not a symbolic allusion to the Christian Church, as many theologians supposed, but literally meant the Jews. For the Church, God had quite different intentions. At the second advent, Darby argued, Christ would again offer the Kingdom to Israel, and David's throne would again be occupied; the temple would be restored; and the traditional Jewish sacrifices would be reinstituted. All this had nothing to do with the Church, however. The Church, Darby maintained, would be raised up before the tribulations that were to come on earth: indeed, through her special relation to Christ, she dwelt already with him in 'heavenly places'.

Since Darby's time, therefore, the Exclusives have not, strictly, expected the second advent, since they do not believe that they will still be on earth when it happens; they expect, rather, to be taken up to Christ before his reappearance on earth. The Church has no part in the tribulations of the world, no responsibility for it, and this justifies the Brethren in remaining aloof. God's covenant with Israel put the Jews under the Law, but the Church had quite a different dispensation – that of grace.

Although Darby referred repeatedly to 'the Church', he did not explicitly claim that the Exclusive Brethren alone were the Church. He came near to doing so, but in the light of Scripture, the point would have been difficult to assert unreservedly. In practice, however, this has certainly been the informal assumption of Exclusives in recent times. The difficulties of this position were somewhat resolved by a teaching developed by one of Darby's 20th century successors, James Taylor Sr, whose doctrine of subjective and objective salvation distinguished salvation to be attained in heaven from the sense of salvation experienced on earth.

The Saintly Elite

The latter could be found only in an Exclusive assembly, the company of saints. Only there could the believer gain the practical enjoyment of eternal life, through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. Taylor went on to assert that 'morally' (a word of which Exclusives are particularly fond) the Church *was* Christ, and since salvation was in Christ alone, experience of salvation was to be had only in the assembly. This assertion and other 'lines of ministry', as Exclusives refer to new doctrinal trends, led to an increasingly sectarian position whereby Brethren were taught to see themselves as the saintly elite. The sect became the only acceptable context for the saint.

The process by which the Brethren came to accept this intensified separation from the world involved repeated schisms. Since there was no formal authority to judge issues, each separate assembly decided whom it would accept into fellowship. Diverse judgements, attempts at compromise and even hesitation in deciding led to recurrent and ramifying processes of schism, and intense insecurity. In more recent times, the telephone has helped to prevent embarrassment in assemblies faced with a stranger seeking to break bread with them; an informal network of information has become more readily available, so preventing the perhaps irreparable error of refusing to admit a righteous saint (recognized elsewhere) or the certainly irreparable error of admitting one who was elsewhere rejected. These difficulties led to a number of mutually excommunicated fellowships coming into being in the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Exclusives proper trace their descent from Darby and, after him, through successive (but quite informal) 'leaders': J. B. Stoney, F. E. Raven, James Taylor Sr and, in the 1950s and 60s, James (Big Jim) Taylor Jr. This branch of the Brethren, in the course of repeated schisms, steadily abandoned their interest in evangelism, until today they are almost completely closed. The concern with inner purity has almost eclipsed the idea of preaching salvation to outsiders. Strangers are admitted to only one service, and if they repeat their attendance they are likely to come under very close scrutiny and interrogation. It is still possible to join the sect, but to do so is to put one's entire life and activity to the test. Former members, whether they have left or been expelled, are not readily received back.

Since 1950 or thereabouts, the Exclusive Brethren have undergone successive crises, and expulsions and divisions have become virtually the principal preoccupation of members of the movement. The period of leadership of Big Jim Taylor of New York has been characterized by uncertainty about the standing of particular individuals and the acceptability of particular 'lines of ministry'. The expectation that the truth will continue to be 'opened up' has led to a steadily accelerated development of doctrine. New variants of accepted teachings are continually propounded among them, and these are said to 'link on' with past teaching. But because of the uncertainty about authority, and the danger in which a man stands if what he expounds as new truth comes to be regarded as heresy, this process has been attended by acute anxiety.

Typically, young men seek prestige by asking questions of visiting speakers and by developing new lines of interpretation; this is one of the few ways they can acquire status. If a man's ideas are accepted, in his own assembly and beyond, prestige is gained and the individual rises in the unofficial status system of the movement. The process, however, is dangerous. The individual may develop a teaching that proves unacceptable and this will lead to humiliation or, if persisted with, to expulsion. Rivalries between 'up-and-coming' expositors of Scripture lead to keenly fought judgements and bubble reputations have burst on various occasions in recent years. In practice Big Jim Taylor, whose own position of leadership has not always been secure, has tended to be the final arbiter of acceptable teaching, though in fact the latent assumptions about how the truth of new teaching is to be tested are obscure. His inclination, following that of his predecessors, has been to drive the movement into ever more intensified separation from the world.

Today, in consequence of the most recently developed teachings, Exclusives rigorously avoid all other associations and all but the most essential contacts with the world. Trade union membership, and even membership of professional bodies, is no now permitted. A recent attempt to gain exemption for the pharmacists in the movement in Britain from compulsory membership of the Pharmaceutical Society failed when the House of Lords refused to pass a measure of toleration (already passed in the Commons and by the Pharmaceutica Society itself). In consequence all but one o these pharmacists abandoned their profession rather than abandon their sectarian allegiance. New regulations within the movement about not working on Saturday have caused difficulty for one sizeable community of Brethren, the fishermen of the Moray Firth in Scotland, but others have simply accepted the new regulations. Such is the dependence on the movement – members usually have no friends and few acquaintances outside it – that new regulations are almost always accepted by the Brethren.

The distinctive beliefs of the Exclusive Brethren were formulated by John Nelson Darby; his supporters left the original Brethren to become the first Exclusives

Bad Press Publicity

The Brethren espouse the strong 'work ethic' typical of extreme Protestant groups and they value typical Puritan moral qualities. Family life is of special importance, but since separation from all who are not in fellowship is absolutely insisted upon families expel their wayward members just as do assemblies. This demand for separation, even from a spouse who fails to fulfi the demands of the movement, has brought the Exclusives bad press publicity in Britain in recent years. Entertainment, including television, is avoided. Children are as far as possible insulated from other children Brethren refuse to eat food cooked by outsiders; they will not occupy a flat in a house in which persons other than Brethren use the same door; they refuse to shake hands with non-Brethren. Members do not move to any place where there is no assembly in being. They do not vote, and they see their whole well-being in the 'heavenly' experience of the meetings. In recent years the interest of the newspapers in the Brethren has led, in both Australia and Britain, to much greater secrecy in their affairs.

Innovation in teaching and liturgy (which has grown more elaborate, and has come to include confessional exercises) has not, in recent years, led to schism so much as to numerous individual expulsions. Those expelled have not generally found it easy to form new assemblies. Membership has dropped and the sect appears to have entered a vortex of successive purges. It is difficult to assess the strength of the Brethren, but in Britain they probably number between 10,000 and 20,000, with strong concentrations in the southeast and home counties the Midlands, industrial Yorkshire, the Clyde Valley, Moray Firth and around Belfast.

BRYAN WILSON

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Greater knowledge of psychosomatic illness and mental disease has led to the afflicted being treated by the physician rather than the priest: yet even today the cleric is still sometimes called upon to use his powers in cases of apparent possession

EXORCISM

THE EXPULSION of an evil spirit by a command, ritual or prayer is called exorcism and supposes some theory of the inhabitation or infestation of a human soul or a place by evil spirits. Until quite recently much modern thinking on the subject was dominated by the view of E. B. Tylor (Primitive Culture, 1871), who propounded a theory of animism, that primitive man, when once he has built up a concept of his own soul out of dreams and other psychic experiences, extrapolates this same soul, finding its semblance in beasts and even in lifeless objects. Professor Evans-Pritchard, however, in his work on the Azande (see AZANDE), refuted the theory of animism in this connection.

The Azande conceive that the powers of witchcraft reside within a witch's body, and by cutting out a gland or pouch from the region of the witch's liver they can be removed. They hold that a wizard can have wizard sons but no witch daughters, and a witch likewise has witch daughters but no wizard sons. The Azande say that when a man has been bewitched 'the soul of the wizard's magic has eaten the soul of the flesh of that man'. Below the grade of wizard come 'gall-bladder men', who are thought to be less dangerous. All this is very physical. In a modern primitive tribe one does not necessarily see the same process of thought as can be projected back into the earliest stages of humanity, yet this example is helpful because it suggests one way in which the idea of possession by evil spirits may have developed.

At the root of exorcism lies belief in the power to transfer a spiritual being from place to place by ritual acts and words. Such a belief seems to have been at work in the minds of the early Romans when they carried out their *evocatio*, which may be looked upon as an exorcism of a community rather than of an individual. In war, before the final assault on a hostile town, the Romans conducted a solemn ritual of calling out the gods of the enemy. This happened, for instance, in the campaign against the city of Veii. The gods were invited to join Rome, with promises of worship and good treatment if they did. Correct use of the name of the god or goddess was an essential part of the ritual, and fear lest an enemy should try to evoke Roman gods led to the concealment of the true name of the genius or guardian spirit of Rome; the Roman writers Servius and Pliny say that it was not known whether this original tutelary deity was male or female.

The Romans must have begun by regarding the gods of the enemy as themselves hostile, for otherwise the ritual of propitiation would have been pointless. This belief can be traced with some probability to the Hittites of Asia Minor; one of their tablets speaks of an offering of beer being set out for three gods of an enemy town, along with coloured ribbons to mark the way to the beer. The colours used were red, white and blue.

The Forgiveness of Sins

The Jews of the Old Testament were quite different in their outlook; the Baals – gods of enemy Canaanite towns – were not propitiated but looked upon as captives and slaves when victory had been won. In the Old Testament there are no stories of exorcism save for the episode of Tobias and Sarah in the Apocrypha (Tobit, chapters 6-8). Sarah was not in fact possessed by a demon but guarded by one, much as in later stories the princess is guarded by a dragon. Later Jewish writings have plenty of exorcism stories and the Qumran documents have shown (in the so-called Prayer of Nabonidus) that a Jewish exorcist could be

BIPS

BIPS

BIPS

The man kneeling before the altar, a postman, believes that he is possessed by an evil spirit which is trying to kill him: he has come for help to a London vicar who regularly performs exorcisms. The vicar lays his hands on the man's head, becomes tense with concentration and begins the exorcism: 'I rebuke thee! I rebuke thee! I rebuke thee! I abjure thee and summon thee forth from this man...'

credited with the forgiveness of sins and consequent healing. Josephus made the claim that Solomon had been taught the art of exorcism by God and that he passed this on in his writings, but the Scripture has no trace of this. Certainly by the time of Christ exorcism was well established among the Jews; apocryphal writings such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* bear witness to it, and in the Gospels (Matthew 12.27 and Luke 11.19) Christ refers to it as a well-known fact.

Christian exorcism was not originally confused with healing: Gospels differentiate between the two in their accounts of the work of Christ (Matthew 4.24 and 8.16; Luke 6.17). Sometimes disease and diabolical infestation are regarded as combined: for instance, the woman bent double is said by Christ to have been bound by Satan (Luke 13.16). Some take this as a concession to the contemporary Jewish way of thinking, but more reasonably one may argue that psychosomatic maladies (whose roots are in mind, body and soul) are sometimes more and sometimes less spiritual in their origins.

Exorcizing the Water

Waterless places are spoken of in the Gospel (Matthew 12.43) as an unsatisfactory abode for evil spirits when they have been driven out of a man. It was generally thought that water was their element, and the Christian Church began quite early – about 150 AD – to make a blessing or exorcism of the water to be used for baptism.

The practice grew of treating all mental defectives and epileptics as if they were troubled by the Devil. A part of the church was set aside for those who came within this broad category and exorcists were appointed to stay with these sufferers during the service and keep them quiet. In Rome in 251 Pope Cornelius had a total of 52 men as exorcists, readers and doorkeepers. The regions into which Rome was traditionally divided were 14, and it is probable that the exorcists numbered one to each region. The overriding idea seems to have been that the afflicted should as far as possible be regarded as a part of the Christian community, since this would help their rehabilitation. These official exorcists were more like male nurses and differed wholly from those rare individuals who were considered to have a gift from God to deliver men from evil spirits. St Paul drove a spirit out of a girl who foretold the future (Acts chapter 16) and he had unsuccessful imitators (Acts chapter 19). Even Christ had such imitators (Mark 9.38 and Luke 9.49-50). The magical papyri that have come to light in recent times advise exorcism in the name of 'Jesus, god of the Hebrews'; spectacular success in exorcism naturally bred imitation.

Baptism was preceded by exorcism from the earliest Christian times. The theory was that the candidate for baptism had been engaged in worshipping pagan gods who were no better than a cover for demons; in fact, the whole world was considered to be in the power of the Devil until it was redeemed by Christ. A voluntary renunciation of the Devil was required of the candidate because the human will was a vital factor in possession; no one could be manoeuvred by the Devil unless he had given his consent. When infants were baptized, the renunciation was undertaken by sponsors on their behalf. An apocryphal work of the 2nd century, *The Gospel of Truth*, compares the baptized to jars which have been filled and then sealed; before filling with the Spirit of God they had to be emptied of all previous contents.

Hearken, Then, Satan

The following conjuration comes from the Appendix to the edition of the Rituale Romanum *published in 1631; it forms part of a ceremony for exorcizing a house troubled with an evil spirit and was to be pronounced by a priest*

I adjure thee, O serpent of old, by the Judge of the living and the dead; by the Creator of the world who hath power to cast into hell, that thou depart forthwith from this house. He that commands thee, accursed demon, is He that commanded the winds, and the sea and the storm. He that commands thee, is He that ordered thee to be hurled down from the height of heaven into the lower parts of the earth. He that commands thee is He that bade thee depart from Him. Hearken, then, Satan and fear. Get thee gone, vanquished and cowed, when thou art bidden in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who will come to judge the living and the dead and all the world by fire. Amen.

Quoted by H. Thurston
Ghosts and Poltergeists

Neoplatonist philosophy, developed in Greece during the early centuries of the Christian era, brought in the concept of spiritual bodies for demons and angels, made of the most subtle of the elements, air. Some of the Greek theologians, from Gregory Nazianzen down to Michael Psellos in the 11th century, were attracted by the idea, and this made for much cruder theories of exorcism. If air had to be extracted from the possessed person then the use of torture did not come amiss.

Conflict of Opinions

Whereas in 1080 Pope Hildebrand could write to King Haakon of Denmark to say that women accused of weather magic and spells were innocent and that to attempt to punish them was foolish and would provoke the anger of God, in the East Michael Psellos was writing a blood-curdling treatise on the power of demons. In the West the Synod of St Patrick had decreed excommunication for anyone who brought an accusation of witchcraft or believed in witches, and this decree was copied into many of the early codes of canon law, providing a brake on popular scares which was lacking in the East. The learned cleric John of Salisbury (c 1115-80) gave stern warnings on the abuse of exorcism: holiness was required in the Church's ministers and if they were lacking in this they might seem to effect an exorcism but the final outcome might well be a worse infestation.

St Thomas Aquinas (c 1225-74) argued that intellect and will, the finer points of the human soul, are opaque to devilish scrutiny. Devils can infer from the play of imagination and stirring of sense-appetite what a man is thinking about or choosing, but they cannot be sure. Possession when it occurs must be due to a willing surrender on the part of the man or woman. An exorcism formula going back to Anglo-Saxon times prays that God will turn the thoughts and heart of the possessed man, that he may confess all his sins. It continues: 'Wherefore, accursed demon, recognize thy doom; give honour to God; depart from this his servant, so that, when grace comes to him, he may serve God with a pure mind.'

Such views excluded the possibility that men could be bewitched against their will. None the less, the influence of Arabic medicine and the beginnings of what may be called the experimental science of the Middle Ages led those familiar with the Neoplatonist teaching about demonic bodies of air to a ready belief that bewitchment and exorcism might both come about without reference to a man's own choice. A drawn-out conflict between 'progressive' Neoplatonist experimenters and conservative theologians ensued, which had not been resolved at the time of the Reform-ation. One such progressive of the early 14th century, Peter of Abano, put down the deadly gaze of the basilisk to the emission of a corrupting vapour. The practice of testing a suspected witch by throwing her into water was based on the same set of ideas. If she floated, the devil, in the form of air, was proved to be still in her; if she sank she was free.

Signs of Possession

The Rituale of Pope Urban VIII directs the exorcist to be slow to believe he has a case of possession before him. Diagnostic signs are the knowledge of matters (a language, for instance) which the subject could not have learnt normally and the use of abnormal strength. Urban also provided a ritual for the exorcism of places troubled by poltergeists.

It is known that the ancient symptoms of possession usually have natural causes, though the philosophy of Descartes (1596-1650), as it retarded the growth of psychosomatic medicine by emphasizing the division between body and soul, for a long time rendered more difficult the distinction of true from false possession. Hypnosis can produce corpse-like rigidity, subconscious memory can bring up scraps of unknown speech, and cases of extra-sensory perception are now on public record.

A modern exorcist, Fr J. de Tonquédec, who acted for the archdiocese of Paris from 1919 to 1939, has written that over 90 per cent of the cases submitted to him were of pseudo-possession, where psychiatric treatment was needed, but that there remained a residue of what he was compelled to believe to be genuine possession.

Telepathy between human beings has had much recent investigation; it seems to e more in evidence when it has a physical asis, as between identical twins. The ncursion of thoughts and suggestions from being that is more than human (for this is hat possession must amount to, if there is uch a thing) would also perhaps require a asis in physical temperament as developed y the bias of a human will that is dedi-ated to what is evil. It would then be true hat there can be no possession without the nsent of the possessed.

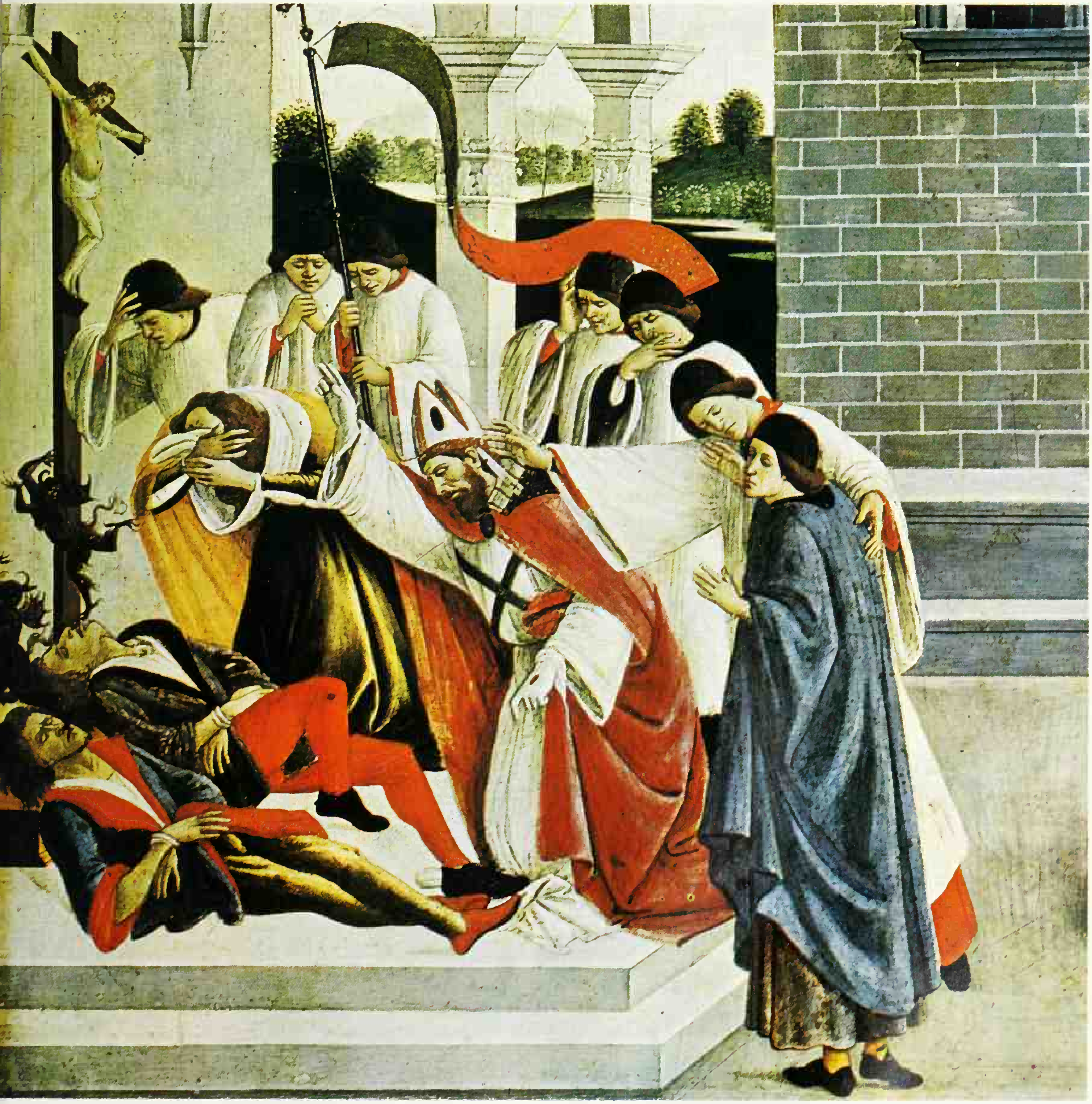
The second half of the 20th century has brought a renewed interest in exorcism in the West, as part of the revival of fascination with the 'supernatural'. Some curious exorcisms have been attempted, including efforts to cleanse the entire Bermuda Triangle of its supernatural evil and to rid Loch Ness of its monster (and indeed, it must be admitted that, since the exorcism was carried out, no monster has verifiably appeared there as yet).

On a more serious level, there has been a steady demand for exorcism from people involved in cases of apparent possession or of infestation of houses and buildings by evil entities. People may turn to exorcism only as a last resort after all else has failed, but turn they do, and the Christian Churches, though generally taking a cautious and sceptical attitude to claims of possession, have been forced to meet a growing demand for the services of trained exorcists. (See also MADNESS; POSSESSION.)

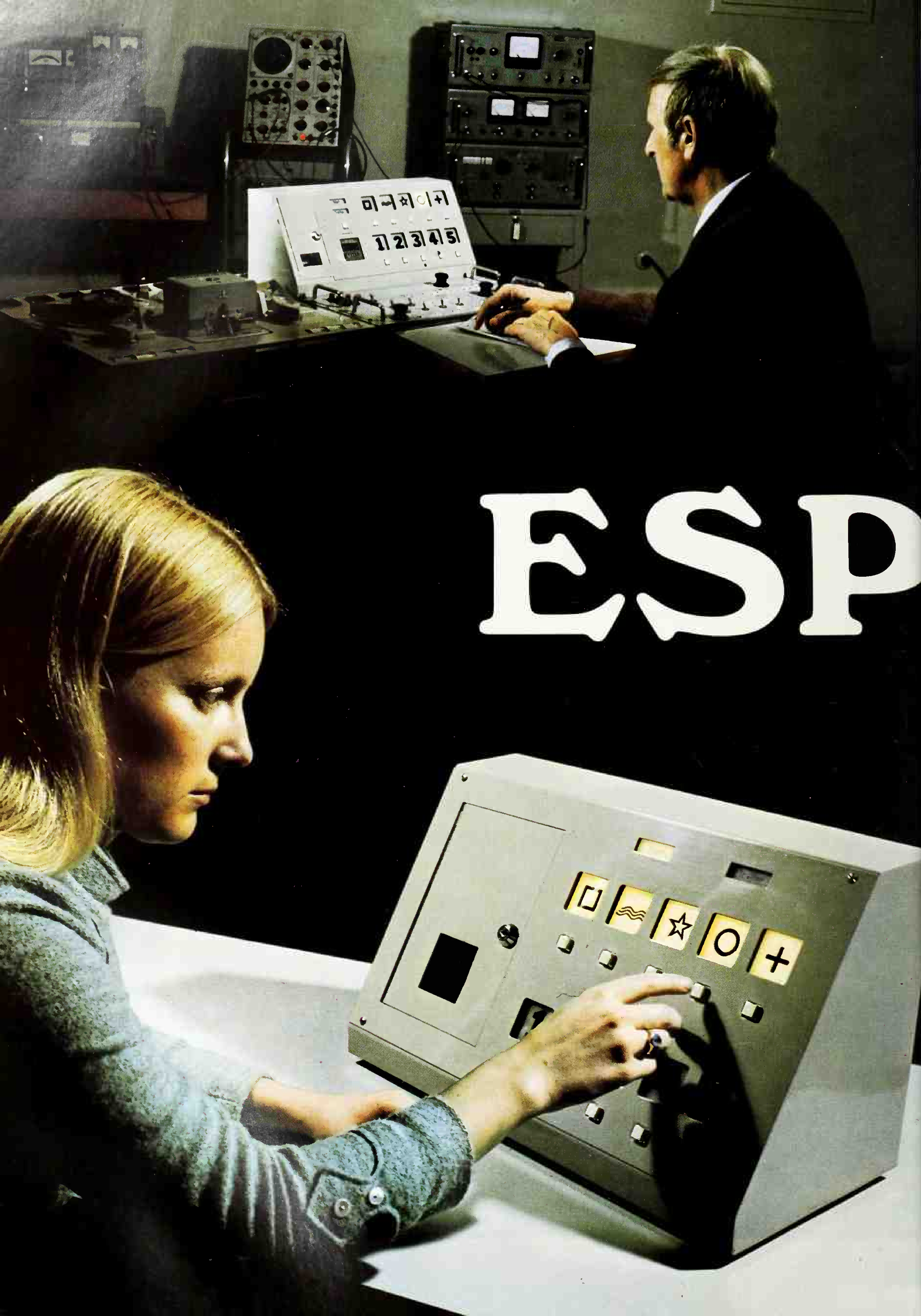
J. H. CREHAN*

FURTHER READING: Article on 'Devil' by J.H. Crehan, *Catholic Dictionary of Theology* (Nelson, 1967); E.E.Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1976); E. Nauman Jr, *Exorcism through the Ages* (Citadel Press, 1974); Jean Lhermitte, *True and False Possession* (Hawthorn Books, 1963); H.Thurston, *Ghosts and Poltergeists* (Regnery, 1955); P.Underwood, *Exorcism* (Hale, 1990).

etail from Botticelli's painting, *Three Miracles f St Zenobius*: the saint has successfully xorcized two young men of evil spirits, which sue from their mouths in the form of black nps. Spirits were thought to enter and leave e body by the natural orifices



National Gallery, London



ESP

One type of extra-sensory perception, precognition or knowledge of the future through dreams, is typical of a vast amount of reported human experience

Many years' research into clairvoyance, precog-ition and telepathy indicates that extrasensory owers, working independently of known phys-al laws, may be common to all mankind.

HE RECEPTION of information by a person hrough other means than the senses is nown as extra-sensory perception or ESP. t is thus one aspect of a two-way exchange ith the environment that is not mediated y the senses and muscles. This more inclu-ive 'extra-sensorimotor' interaction is the rea of study of the science known as para-sychology, and it is now conveniently iden-ified by the use of the Greek letter psi. Extra-sensory perception is therefore one ind of psi communication, the other or extra-motor' part of the exchange being alled psychokinesis (the manipulating of natter by mind alone) or PK.

Three types of ESP have been recognized. They were known long before the term xtra-sensory perception was first used in 934. Clairvoyance is the ESP of objects or vents, precognition the knowledge of uture events, and telepathy the experience f another person's mental state.

The types of human experience repre-ented by these three ESP classifications are ot only very old but broadly distributed hrough the cultures of mankind, and one ecognizes the similarity of experience. For example, premonitory dreams of personal ragedies, which are among the most com-monly reported psi experiences in our own ime, can also be found among the records f ancient times. The dream credited to King Croesus, in which he foresaw the murder of his son, differed from the type oday chiefly in that it was the guard the King appointed as a consequence of his dream who turned out to be the murderer. This circular feature, which rarely appears n modern premonitory dreams, could well have been invented by a clever storyteller, as indeed the whole story itself may have been.

Abraham Lincoln's dream too, in which he is said to have seen himself in the coffin in which he lay some days later, also has to be viewed against the background of literary licence. But the point is that this type of ESP, precognition, in which information of a future event is seemingly acquired, is typical of a vast amount of reported human experience. The dream is one of the vehicles of extrasensory communication; future events definitely appear to be conveyed in some way, even against the stream of time; and this has been going on for a long, long time all around the world.

Machines are used in ESP research for strict control and efficiency, and often to randomize targets in clairvoyance or precognition tests, to exclude telepathy between subject and tester: this is the Prismaton 70 used in Germany

The Person 'Just Knows'

In the waking state, however, while ESP can be found in the daydreams that sometimes intrude, the device that most often brings ESP to the conscious experience of the individual is intuition, a form of knowledge that hides the means by which it is accomplished. The person 'just knows', and while they may know of something yet to happen or may intuitively know the thought of a distant friend or loved one, somewhat more commonly they know of an objective event. But in most of these cases of ESP in everyday life, there is no sharp boundary and no one can tell for certain that a case is pure clairvoyance or half telepathy. The woman who knew there was something wrong at home, and who insisted on being driven home by her host in the midst of a dinner party, seemed to have only a dim half-awareness of the tragic situation; but this and the house afire, and her invalid husband asleep, at least suggest clairvoyance.

But the mother who, in the midst of a bridge game, telephoned her home to ask what was the matter with the baby may have been telepathically experiencing the baby's painful predicament at the moment rather than 'seeing' the objective picture by clairvoyance. What emerges is the strong probability that in a few rare cases it is thought alone that is conveyed. In other cases it seems as clearly to be the objective situation that is conveyed. Such experiences have provoked the scientist to ask the question: 'Is it possible for one mind to convey a message directly to another without using sensory channels? Is it possible for an objective crisis to be picked up in some way by a person far beyond sensory range?' The experiences as they accumulated and fell into types threaded themselves on a common hypothesis long before experiments were undertaken to verify it.

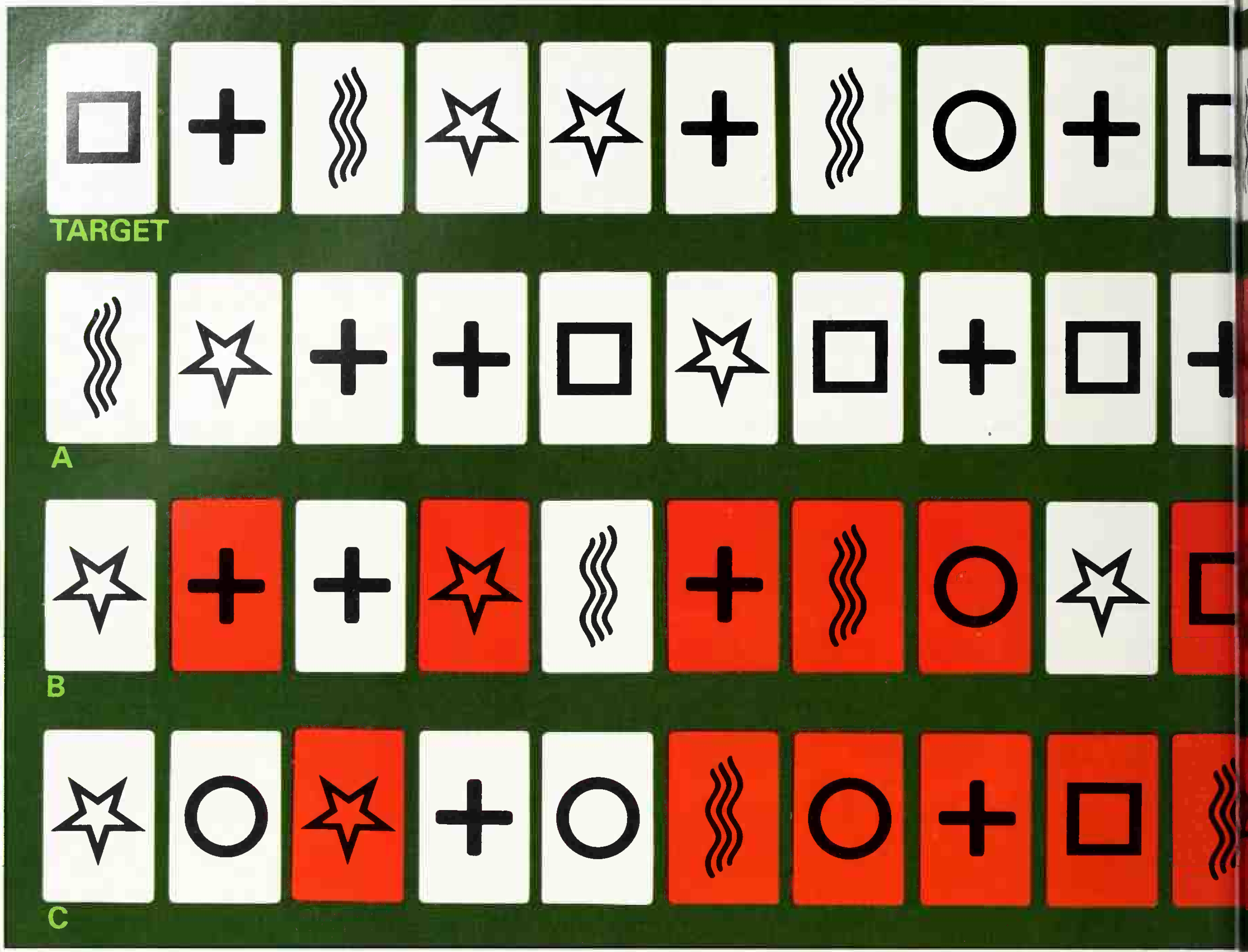
In the waking state there are other ways of getting information to a person's mind by ESP besides intuition. One of these is hallucination, which is a comparatively rare experience, but among those that do occur, telepathy is a common ingredient. The recipient usually sees or hears the person from whom they seem to be getting a message. Voices are more common than visual apparitions. A person experiencing the mental state of the 'sender' may undergo the specific state and even the suffering actually felt by the sender. This can involve going through the birth pains of the other, or the agonies of a heart attack, or even falling to the ground like the victim.

There will be no doubt in anyone's mind about the importance of these puzzling human experiences if they are what they seem. It was the fact, however, that it was impossible to be sure about them that so long delayed the investigation of the questions they raised. They were also not as easy to investigate as were the phenomena of the more objective physical and biological sciences.

These case reports of mysterious happenings represent a class by themselves. If reported, as most of them are, by sane and respectable people, they cannot be lumped with the pathological and they definitely do not fit in easily with any other branch of the sciences. If they have any sound basis of fact, it would be something new for the scientific world – something very different.

Because of this sharp difference, the tendency developed among the earlier sciences to regard these claims as not amenable to serious scientific treatment. They were looked down on as something that could not be explained, as most scientific findings could, by the known and familiar principles of Nature. This meant they would have to be classified as supernatural, which amounted to putting them on the shelf so far as scientific investigation went, which greatly delayed their investigation.

It can be said with unreserved confidence that the belief in ESP (and the related ability, psychokinesis) has had a long and a powerful impact on humankind and its institutions. Quite probably no other single belief has exerted so large an influence on humanity. But this is much harder to see now that over much of the world belief in



ESP is at a low ebb in comparison with ancient times. Consider first what such belief did for the individual who could impress his or her fellows with superior powers of knowing of events to come, of distant happenings, of matters on all sides which the senses could not reach. Such a person, other things being equal, could assume leadership and power.

Wise Men and Soothsayers

Governing systems long clung to the counsel of the 'wise men', the prophets, the soothsayers, the oracles. Most of the magic which was such an important part of all cultures, the farther back from modern technology we look, depended heavily upon belief in extra-sensorial cognitive powers. Even such magic as lingers in our Western cultures still usually carries an element of belief in ESP, obscured as a rule under other formulations. The dowser may hold to a theory of terrestrial magnetism, while essentially assuming an ability more properly recognizable as clairvoyance.

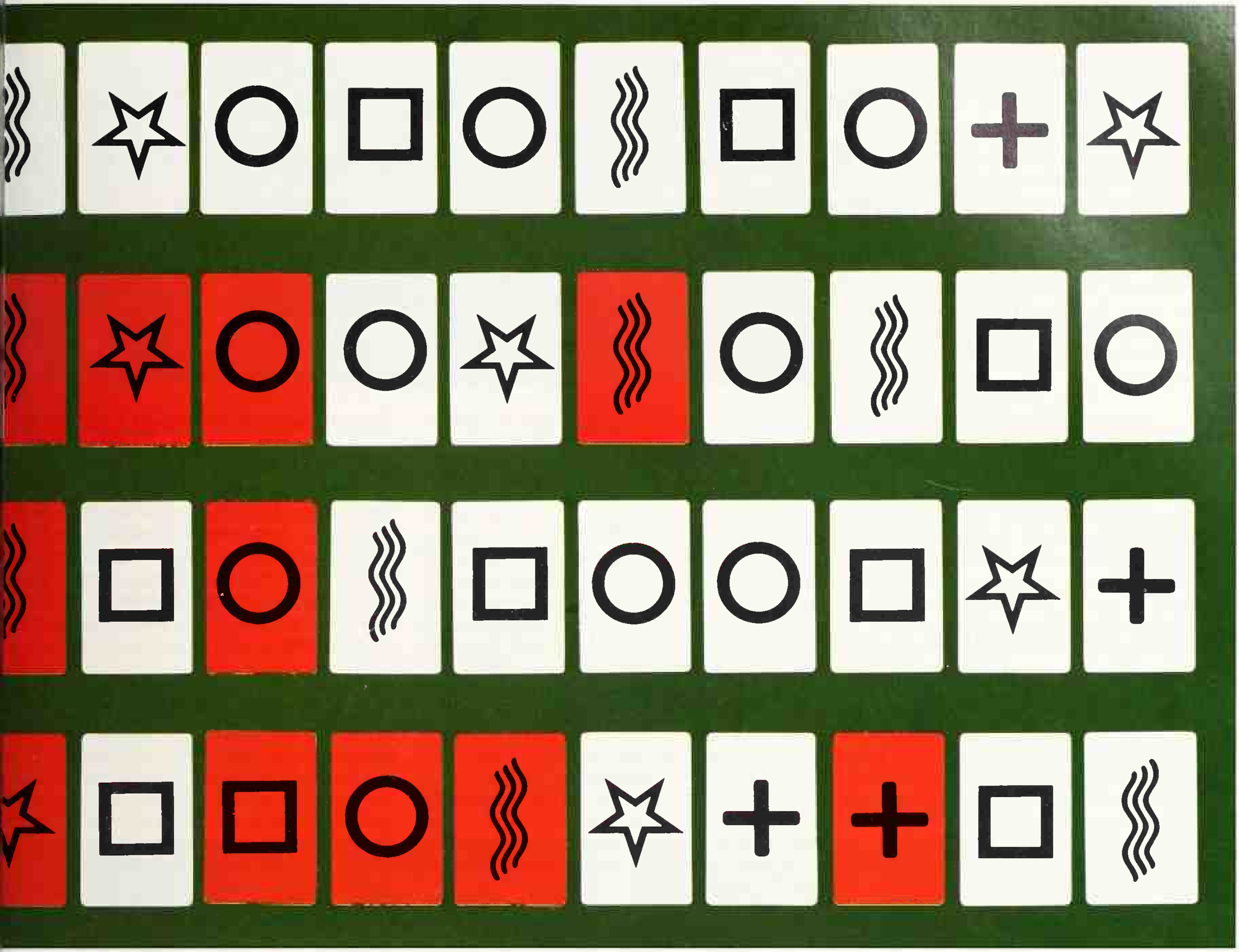
Even the popular concept of luck in games of chance comes close to qualifying as magic; casino games themselves so far approximate to loose tests of psi ability as to provide important elements for testing techniques for ESP and PK.

It is in religion, however, that psi has played by far its greatest role in human life, and here it is important to stress that it is belief in psi that is under discussion. How much genuine capacity has underlain this belief would be difficult to estimate. But it can be said that it is the belief in the powers of psi that has given the religions of mankind their main principles of communication between man and the divine. There is of course a great deal more to religion than the mere basis of exchange, the modes of interaction. But what has come to be called the supernatural (the miraculous and the transcendent) in religion is much the same as the types of capacity that are now the subject of study in parapsychology.

The parallel is rather impressive. All the types of psi are present in the theological system: precognition as prophecy, clairvoyance as revelation, telepathy in prayer, and the answer to prayer through physical miracles as psychokinesis. It would be hard to conceive of religion without psi principles of communication. In a word, the religious follower is bound to believe in psi. This is obvious regardless of the validity of either psi or religious doctrine.

The change from thinking of divine agency as the reason behind such puzzling phenomena as psi, to thinking of psi as a

The first line of Zener cards represents the 'target' of an ESP experiment: 5 'hits' in 20 car be expected on the basis of pure chance. Line A, where the subject has scored 4 hits out of 20 must be put down to chance, but line B, with hits in 20, is the type of result that indicates the possibility of ESP. In Column C the subject has consistently anticipated the target, providing an example of 'displacement'. This latter phenomenon was reported by S.G. Soal (below in 1943, but subsequent investigation suggested his findings were invalid



natural principle of communication, called for some explanatory idea that made sense. The mere thought of a natural principle of that kind had to wait until men were at the cultural stage when they began to grasp at general laws that could explain natural phenomena. By the 18th century, however, the emergence of the science of physics had brought forth theories of universal fluids and interplanetary forces. Franz Mesmer's theory of a universal animal magnetism encouraged rational thinking as to how people could influence each other without sensory contact and how communication with the spirit world might occur. Emanuel Swedenborg was believed by his followers to have demonstrated that it actually did so. The 19th century concept of a universal ether and of wavelike communication in this medium favoured the search for a natural explanation for what had been hitherto regarded as completely miraculous. It brought within the bounds of the more venturesome speculation of the day the claim of survival after death of spiritual or ethereal bodies, as well as possible communication with the dead on telepathic lines.

The Spiritualist movement based on communication with the dead through mediums was a natural result of these and other favouring systems of thought. The somnambulism that developed from later mesmeric practices contributed an important device for the practice of mediumship. By the 1880s enough evidence from mediumship had accumulated to impress a number of scholarly people and to bring the methods of science to bear on the claims made. The Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882 in London to investigate 'mesmeric psychical and spiritualistic claims', set an example that was followed by similar societies in a number of other countries in succeeding years. This movement was capably led, especially in Britain, and made considerable progress in drawing the problems connected with mediumship into better focus, but it did not succeed in bringing the major issue, that of spirit communication, to a scientific conclusion. Rather there was a growing realization over the next 40 years that the problem was more difficult than the Spiritualist demonstrations had suggested.

Nevertheless the attack on the problem of survival after death did direct attention to the claim of thought transference. It was obvious from the start that a medium would have to be gifted with telepathy to intermediate between two worlds; but at the same time, if she were gifted with telepathy she might in this way be able to get the information for her messages from living sources rather than non-material. Telepathy became almost as important an issue as the survival issue itself. It led to experimental work not only under the sponsorship of the Society for Psychical Research but also, during the first quarter of this century, within university departments of psychology, most particularly in America. The American universities of Harvard and Stanford and the University of Groningen, in Holland, were especially active at this time.

The experiments at these three universities, judged by the standards of the day, fully justified continuance but in no case did this happen. Telepathy turned out to be much more difficult to work with than most of the other mental abilities being tested in those days, and ease of demonstration had much to do with the eligibility of a subject for a typical university research programme. Psychology itself was still on trial. Psychical research could add nothing to its respectability, and it could not offer young scientists a successful career. The effort was premature.

But something was established that was important. First, a number of psychologists had obtained significant results in telepathy tests; beginnings had been made.

Second, in some of these tests the subjects were unselected volunteers, not especially gifted individuals. The way had certainly been made easier for the work which was initiated at Duke University in North Carolina in 1927.

With the sponsoring interest of the professor of psychology, William McDougall, and a new and liberal university administration, a more favourable setting was provided for psychical research at Duke University than had existed anywhere before. In addition the two biologists, J.B. and Louisa E. Rhine, who went to Duke to work under McDougall, had undertaken the exploration after some years of independent and critical study of the claims and evidence for ESP.

J.B. RHINE

The long series of experiments carried out at Duke University by J.B. and Louisa E. Rhine produced the first major body of systematically gathered evidence for ESP. J.B. Rhine devoted his attention to proof-oriented research in the laboratory, frequently using Zener cards (as shown in the diagram on previous pages); L.E. Rhine assembled large numbers of spontaneous ESP reports in order to search for patterns that could give a clue to the nature of psi phenomena

In the preceding section the founder of modern parapsychology, J.B. Rhine, introduced the different forms of extrasensory perception, and outlined the early development of the field. The following section describes how present-day parapsychologists conduct research into clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition, and what they have found.

Modern Psi Research

BOTH J.B. Rhine and L.E. Rhine made significant and complementary contributions to parapsychology. While J.B. Rhine established the scientific study of ESP in the laboratory, L.E. Rhine observed how ESP manifested in everyday life, gathering large numbers of spontaneous reports of ESP experiences in order to look for patterns that might give some clue as to the nature of psi phenomena.

Different methods are used to study ESP 'in life and lab', and each approach has its own particular strengths and weaknesses. Together, they can give a more complete understanding of extra-sensory perception. Different researchers may have different aims that can affect how they gather and interpret their data. The most common distinction that is made is between proof-oriented and process-oriented research.

Looking for Proof

Proof-oriented research attempts to show whether or not extra-sensory perception exists. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to rule out other alternative 'normal' explanations for the apparently psychic event. The proof-oriented investigator has to make sure that the experient could not possibly have gained the information through any known channels.

Evidently, it is easier in the laboratory than in real life to rule out information exchange using the known senses, because the laboratory provides a controlled environment that is much simpler (at the same time more artificial) than complex everyday life. For this reason, most – if not all – proof-oriented research is carried out in the laboratory. However, in parapsychology as in the other sciences, no experiment is perfect, and it would be wrong to think that one could prove or disprove the existence of ESP with a single 'conclusive' experiment. Scientific progress only comes from the gradual accumulation of results from many experiments conducted by many different researchers.

Discovering How It Works

A number of parapsychologists consider that the process-oriented approach is more productive and informative. In this case, the aim is not simply to prove that ESP exists, but rather to find out how it works. For example, does it make a significant difference if the sender and the receiver in an ESP experiment are friends rather than total strangers? Are ESP results as positive when the sender and receiver are 5,000 miles away from each other, as when they are 50 feet apart? What are the personality characteristics of individuals who report having psychic experiences in everyday life, and what sorts of people do well in laboratory ESP tests?

Evidently, if consistent and meaningful patterns can be found in process-oriented studies, these trends indirectly provide 'proof' for the existence of ESP. Let us now look at how the problems are studied, in life and in the lab.

Surveys of beliefs about psi in Western cultures have shown that psychic experiences are relatively common. In 1979, for example, questionnaires were sent to a random sample of 300 students at the University of Virginia and 700 other adult local residents. Eighty-nine per cent of the students replied, as did 51 per cent of the locals. Over half of those who responded said that they had experienced some form of psi. For example, almost 40 per cent of respondents reported having at least one waking ESP experience, and the information tended to be received in an intuitive form rather than in the form of a visual hallucination.

How do we know if these were 'genuine' ESP experiences rather than simple misunderstandings or misattributions by the experients? With such surveys we can never be certain. Studies of the reliability and accuracy of the memory of eyewitnesses to crimes and accidents have shown how memory may fade or distort dramatically with the passage of time, so it is always a good idea to note down a detailed description of one's impressions, and to tell others, as soon as possible after one has had a possibly psychic experience. In the case of the survey, over a quarter of those reporting an extra-sensory experience had told another person about it before learning of the event through normal means, and the confirming event usually occurred within 24 hours of the experience itself. This means that the experiences were less likely to be misremembered because independent witnesses could confirm the reported details, and because events were still relatively fresh in the memory of those involved.

The 1979 questionnaire survey found that ESP dreams were just as frequent as waking experiences, and two-thirds of respondents reported that their ESP dreams seemed more vivid than ordinary dreams. Similar patterns have been found in other surveys, though one must bear in mind that a person who has had an extra-sensory experience is probably more likely to fill out and return a questionnaire on ESP than someone who has had no such experience. While people's everyday experiences might still be mistakenly interpreted as ESP experiences, surveys such as these show that there is little doubt that a considerable number of people believe that they have telepathic, clairvoyant, and precognitive experiences.

The SPR Investigates

Perhaps the most progress in understanding extra-sensory perception in everyday life has come from the study of collections of spontaneous cases. This is the area in which L.E. Rhine made her greatest contribution to parapsychology, although she was not the first to gather together large numbers of cases. Soon after its founding in 1882, the Society for Psychical Research called for the public to send in reports of spontaneous experiences. As a

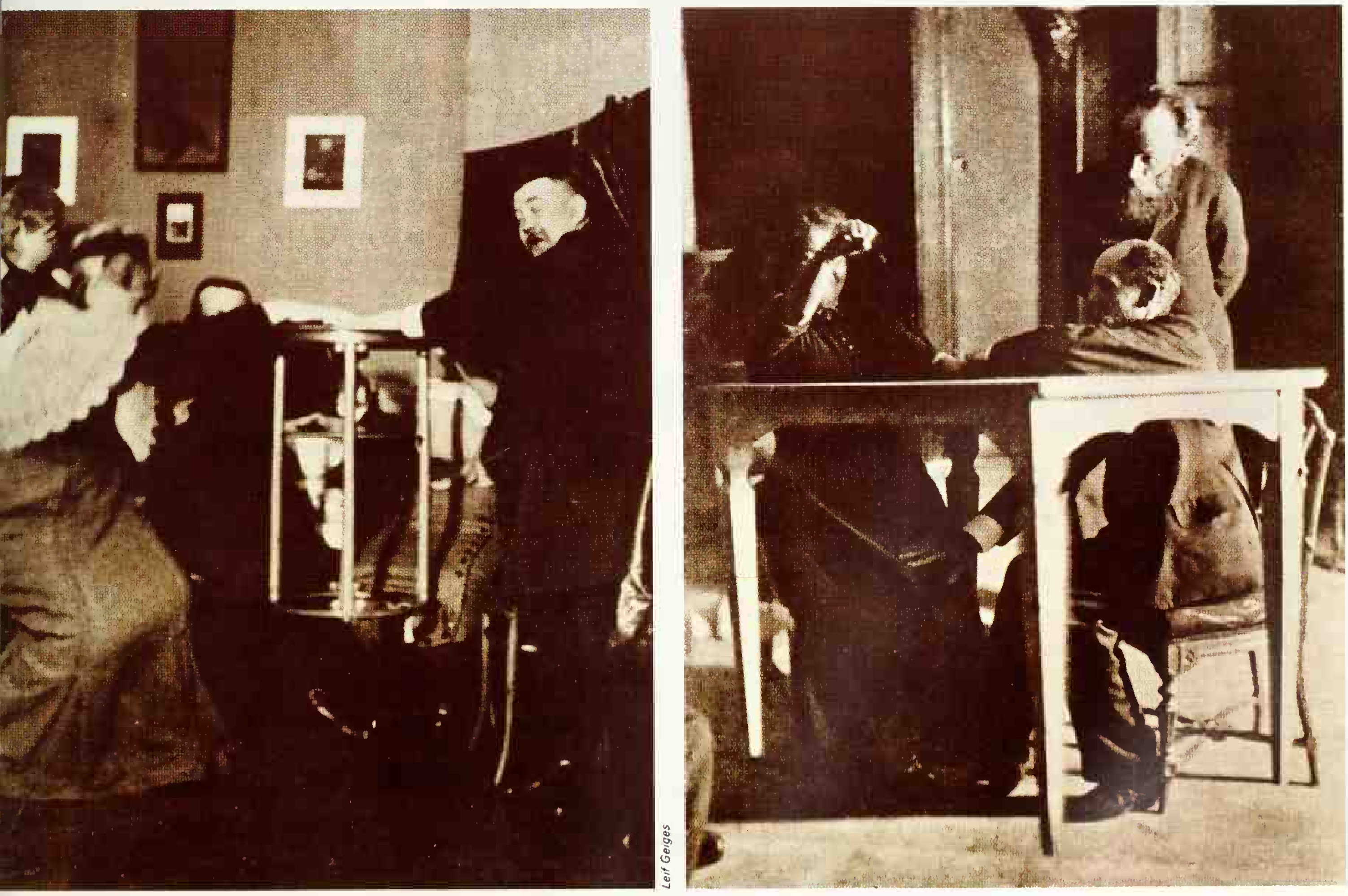
Almost 40 per cent of respondents reported having at least one waking ESP experience... in an intuitive form rather than a visual hallucination

result, 702 cases were investigated, classified, organized, and finally published in two massive volumes.

The investigators adopted a proof-oriented approach, and consequently took great pains to describe the cases as fully as possible, and to gather supporting testimony from witnesses who were regarded as reliable and responsible. For its time, this case collection provided some of the most impressive evidence available for the existence of psi phenomena. However, many less well-documented cases were discarded so, while the investigators took tremendous efforts to document rigorously the cases they included, they ran the risk of missing some important information that might have been gained from the weaker cases.

More recently, L.E. Rhine took the alternative process-oriented approach to the study of spontaneous cases. Working from the assumption that spontaneous cases, by their very nature, could never provide good evidence for psi, she set about gathering large numbers of cases to see if they might contain patterns that would suggest hypotheses to be tested more rigorously under laboratory conditions. Over decades, she analysed more than 15,000 cases that were sent in to the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory. Unlike the nineteenth century SPR researchers, she did not attempt to document each case thoroughly; of course she was aware that many cases could be badly flawed, containing inconsistent and sporadic features, but she assumed that most of these flaws would be cancelled out with large numbers of cases, so that only truly consistent trends would remain.

Such overall patterns could be due to the characteristics of psi functioning, or to normal factors, or to a combination of the two. For example, there is a tendency for more women to report psychic experiences than men. This could be for at least two


Leif Geiges

Leif Geiges

Serious investigation of parapsychology, with testing under controlled conditions, grew out of the intense interest in Spiritualism and mediums in the the 19th century, when controls were at first rudimentary *Left* The famous medium Eusapia Palladino apparently levitating a table *Right* An observer holds Eusapia's arm and leg to prevent trickery

J. B. Rhine

Thousands of experiments have been carried out in American laboratories to investigate PK effects: this girl has attempted to will two dice in a mechanically rotated box to fall with the two-spot face uppermost; one has done so

reasons: women have more 'psychic sensitivity' than men; or women have the same number of experiences as men but feel less inhibited about reporting them. Whatever their basic cause, though, such patterns could suggest hypotheses that could then be subjected to more stringent laboratory testing.

Looking for Patterns

So what kind of patterns emerged from this huge and mostly unselected group of cases? The first thing that was found was that the ESP experiences could indeed be categorised into three basic types as conceptualised in experimental parapsychology: clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition. There were also a number of cases involving physical effects that could be classified as possible spontaneous PK cases.

Restricting attention to the nature of the ESP experiences, however, it was found that these experiences came into the percipient's consciousness in one of three basic forms: as dreams, as intuitions or, in a relatively small number of cases, as hallucinations. In fact about half of the experiences came in the form of dreams, but there was no tendency for any of the three forms of ESP experiences to occur more often in clairvoyance, telepathy, or precognition cases.

Attention was next focused on the so-called crisis telepathy cases, where one individual, usually regarded as the agent, is experiencing some form of trauma at the same time a second individual, the percipient, has the impression that the agent is in trouble. In some of these cases, the agent was actively thinking of and 'calling' to the percipient; yet in others the agent was entirely unaware of the percipient, and in some cases did not even know them. This finding suggests that, although it may be appealing to think of telepathy in terms of a communication model where information is 'sent' from the active agent to the relatively passive percipient, in reality the percipient can play a more important role, just as in clairvoyance and precognition cases, where there appears to be no agent at all.

These cases were not only informative in themselves, they also stimulated the development of experimental research methods. For example, the finding that in everyday life psi experiences seemed to occur most often in dreams stimulated the development of experimental studies where the subjects were put into altered states of consciousness while responding to ESP information. This line of research has evolved into one of the most powerful and successful experimental techniques for studying psi in the laboratory.

Both L.E. and J.B. Rhine accepted the limitations of spontaneous case research, and saw the value of being able to control and systematically manipulate possibly important variables under laboratory conditions, where the experimenter could at first hand observe and record results. For its time, the work done between 1930 and about 1960 at Duke University was innovative and pioneering, and certainly represented the best effort yet made to study psi systematically. Since then, there has been considerable evolution in experimental methods, and few researchers now use exactly the same techniques as were pioneered by J.B. Rhine at Duke. Nevertheless, before considering modern parapsychological techniques, it is important to review the earlier experimental methods, which were to lay the foundation for later generations of researchers.

Experimental Principles

The basic principles of the early research still hold today. In most experiments there is a 'target' which the experimental subject, the 'percipient', is trying to identify. The experimenter is careful to set up 'barriers' around the target so that the percipient cannot use any known senses or inferential techniques to gain information about the nature of the target. For instance, the target could be a card in a sealed envelope that is housed in a separate room from the percipient. There must be no normal way that the percipient could gain any information about the target, and this includes making sure that the experimenter (and anyone else whom the percipient might have contact with before, during, and after the experimental session until the target choice has been recorded) also is 'blind' to the target's identity, because the experimenter might unconsciously or deliberately give out subtle cues that could make the percipient more likely to identify the target correctly.

The percipient selects what they think was the genuine ESP target from a known number of alternatives or 'foils', making up the 'target pool'. If there is an agent involved, perhaps holding the target picture and trying to 'send' it to the percipient, it is important that the percipient does not have access to the target held by the agent, in case subtle sensory cues may have been left on it – but not on the foils – that could guide them to choose it. This is known as the 'greasy fingers' hypothesis, but it is easily circumvented by using duplicate target pools.

Most experimenters conduct many 'trials', in which a number of different percipients respond to a target on a number of different occasions. Once the actual targets become known, it is possible to calculate the 'hit rate' – that is, the number of times that the correct target is chosen in preference to one of the foils. Simple statistical techniques are then used to evaluate the probability that ESP has occurred. The hit rate that would be expected by chance alone is compared to that which is actually found (for instance, with four target possibilities, one would expect to find a 25% hit rate by chance alone).

However, it must always be remembered hat there could be other explanations for extra-chance hit rates than just ESP. High hit rates could be produced as a result of as yet undetected methodological flaws that have enabled the percipient to gain information about the target through more straightforward, though perhaps subtle, means. Parapsychologists must therefore always keep on their toes, alert for possible methodological weaknesses that could produce spurious results, and ready to develop improved research methods in response to the suggestions of their peers and other informed critics.

Moving on to consider ESP research as a whole, the two main research techniques remain unchanged: those using forced-choice methods, and those using free-response methods. The forced-choice methods were pioneered by J.B. Rhine and his associates at Duke University, and at the time they represented the most common experimental approach. More recently, the popularity of forced-choice methods has waned and free-response techniques have come to the fore.

Also known as restricted-choice, forced-choice, as the name suggests, requires the percipient to select the target from a known set of alternatives. J.B. Rhine specially commissioned the design of a set of cards that presented the percipient with a set of neutral symbols. These became the standard ESP, or 'Zener', cards, which were used by most experimenters for the next 40 years.

They consisted of 25 cards showing five sets of five symbols: circle, cross, star, wavy lines and square. The percipient therefore had a restricted choice of target possibilities – the target would always be one of those five symbols – and there was a one-in-five probability of guessing the target correctly by chance alone.

J.B. Rhine tended to prefer clairvoyance techniques. In a typical forced-choice clairvoyance test at Duke, the experimenter and the percipient would be in the same room, the cards would be shuffled either by hand or in some cases mechanically, and the percipient would be asked to guess the identity of one card at a time. Without looking at the actual card order, the experimenter would record the percipient's calls, and once all cards had been guessed, the experimenter would turn over the pile of cards to find the sequence of the target symbols and the number of hits would be calculated.

J.B. Rhine claimed fairly consistent extra-chance scoring for these tests, but a number of methodological flaws meant that there was controversy over the interpretation of his findings. Often there were insufficient precautions against sensory cues between experimenter and percipient (though this criticism did not apply to those experiments where the two were in separate rooms), and hand-shuffling might have resulted in cards being inadequately randomised. Also there was a possibility of errors in recording the target and call sequences. As a result of this controversy, refined testing methods were developed.

The Decline Effect

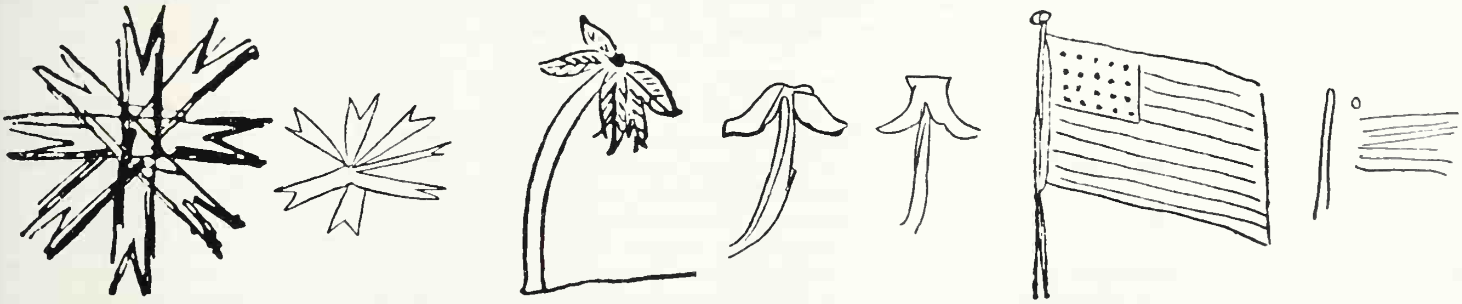
An important feature of the forced-choice ESP results, at Duke and elsewhere, was a tendency for scores to be high to begin with, and then to decline with time. This tendency became so widespread that it was named the 'decline effect'. J.B. Rhine felt that the excitement and novelty that surrounded the early experiments at Duke gradually wore off, so that the decline effect was due to the changing motivations of percipients and experimenters. It would certainly be understandable for the percipient to become gradually bored with a procedure where he or she repeatedly guessed one of five neutral symbols, dozens or even hundreds of times. The kinds of unique dramatic events that can often occur in real-life psi experiences are a long way from the repeated guessing of five neutral symbols, in terms of the psychological involvement and motivation of the percipient.

On the other hand, critics said that experimental conditions were lax to begin with and that the ESP scores declined as methodological improvements were made. Whatever the reason for the decline effect, parapsychologists began to explore alternative testing methods, notably free-response techniques.

The main characteristic of free-response techniques is that, although the number of target alternatives may be known, the possible content of the target pool is not. In other words, the targets are generally richer, more complex, and conceivably more interesting than forced-choice targets. For instance, free-response targets could be line drawings, magazine photographs, postcard-sized art prints, View-Master slide reels, video clips, three dimensional objects, even geographical or achitectural sites. Rather than simply guessing from a known number of alternatives, the percipient in a free-response study reports any impressions that come to mind.

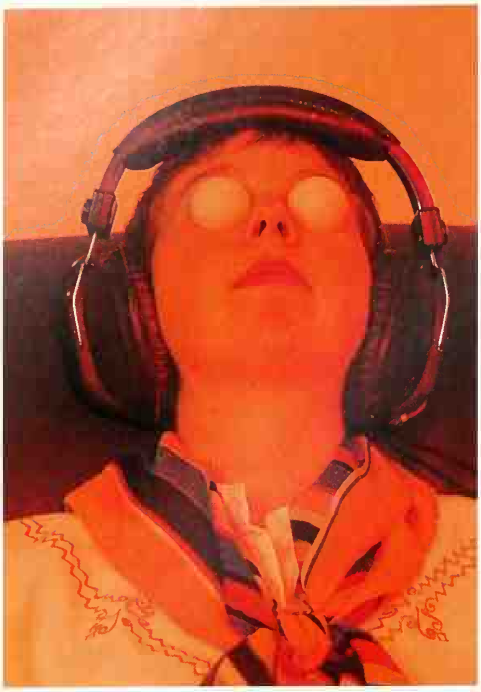
These impressions, known as 'mentations', can be in the form of mental imagery, feelings, thoughts, even emotions, and sensations of smell and movement. Such varied impressions more closely resemble the ways in which psi impressions seem to appear in consciousness in everyday ESP experiences.

Given the potentially infinite range of target and mentation possibilities, how do we know if the target has been correctly identified? In forced-choice methods a 'hit' is unambiguous – the percipient calls 'star'



Mental Radio

In his book *Mental Radio*, published in 1930, the American writer Upton Sinclair described a series of tests which he conducted with the assistance of his wife, Mary Craig Sinclair, who seemed to possess extra-sensory perception. Above are the results of three of these tests, in which Mary Craig, by concentrating on the thoughts of her husband, attempted to reproduce *(on the right)* little sketches drawn by him, without her having seen the originals *(on the left)*. Comments describing her 'mental visions' were often attached to indistinct drawings



Alva Bernadine

Above **In the autoganzfeld technique, the receiver sits semi-reclined in a comfortable chair bathed in red light, with goggles over the eyes, while headphones play 'white noise' to the ears. The targets are stored on video tape, the sender being in a separate acoustically-isolated and electrically-shielded room *(right)*. A computer randomly selects and displays a target to the sender without any other experimenter being aware of the target's identity**

and the target is (or is not) a star. In free-response methods it is necessary for the percipient or another individual to judge the similarity between the mentation and the items in the target pool.

It is extremely rare for the percipient to give a complete and accurate description of a free-response target, because the mentation contains target-irrelevant thoughts and impressions of the sort that typically float round our heads when we are allowing our thoughts to wander, and because psi impressions are generally faint and subject to distortion and misinterpretation. But the hope is that more of the mentation will relate to the target than to the other members of the pool.

While forced-choice methods enable the rapid generation of a large number of responses to simple targets, free-response methods are relatively time-consuming. On the other hand, free-response techniques have the advantage of enabling much richer ESP impressions to emerge into consciousness, and the qualitative correspondences between mentation and target can allow greater insight into the psi process than the forced-choice method.

Altered States of Consciousness

Bearing in mind L.E. Rhine's finding that a large percentage of spontaneous cases involve dreams, several researchers began to explore the use of altered states of consciousness (ASC) in conjunction with free-response techniques. This has become a very productive line of research. In many free-response experiments, a mild altered state of consciousness might be induced in the percipient in order to facilitate the emergence of psi information. Extreme ASC, such as that induced by psychedelic drugs, is not thought to be helpful because the percipient is inclined to become somewhat disoriented. Generally, the percipient should remain relatively alert so that he or she can respond to the ESP task, while at the same time allowing less structured and non-analytic thought processes to occur.

The assumption that lies behind the use of ASC in psi research is called the 'noise reduction model'. This model, introduced by Charles Honorton, holds that ESP is a weak signal that must compete with other sources of external and internal stimulation, or 'noise'; the purpose of the ASC is to reduce potentially target-irrelevant noise.

Various techniques are used to induce ASC. Hypnosis was popular some time ago, but it was not generally found to be associated with particularly strong ESP performance. There was also considerable interest in dream research, where the percipient slept in the laboratory, his or her eye movements were monitored and a target was repeatedly sent to the sleeper during dreaming periods. Some impressive results were obtained in these dreaming-ESP studies, but in practical terms the methodology was time-consuming and difficult, so researchers began to opt for more simple techniques, such as meditation, relaxation, and the 'ganzfeld'.

Although meditation can have religious associations for some practitioners, the majority of those who use meditation in ESP experiments do so in order to focus the mind on the task at hand, and to remove other distracting thoughts. Meditation can consist of mentally focusing on a simple object, a sound, a thought, or even on nothingness, in the attempt to clear the mind completely.

There are many different forms of relaxation, ranging from simply taking a few deep breaths, to following a procedure that focuses on different parts of the body in turn, alternately tensing and releasing muscle groups until the body becomes very relaxed. Mental relaxation may be achieved with the use of simple imagery techniques, for instance imagining oneself sitting in a beautiful garden full of wonderful smells, sights and sounds, where one is completely safe and happy.

The Ganzfeld

Braud and Honorton introduced the ganzfeld technique into parapsychology, and Honorton is credited with developing the technique to the stage where it has become one of the most important lines of ESP research. Ganzfeld is from the German meaning 'whole field', and the aim is to provide the percipient with completely uniform or unpatterned sensory stimulation so that the attention becomes focused on internal thoughts and images.

This is usually achieved by seating the percipient in a comfortable reclining chair. Headphones play 'white noise' (something ike radio static) to the ears, goggles are laced over the eyes, and a red light is hone on the percipient so that, with their yes open, they see a pleasant pink light hrough the goggles. In the absence of any neaningful external stimulation, inter-ially-produced imagery usually becomes nore prolific, and the percipient reports loud any thoughts, feelings or images (the nentation) that occur during the 20 to 45 ninutes that they are in the ganzfeld. At he same time (in telepathy studies), an ESP arget is being viewed by a sender and it is oped that the mentation will contain ele-nents that are related to the target.

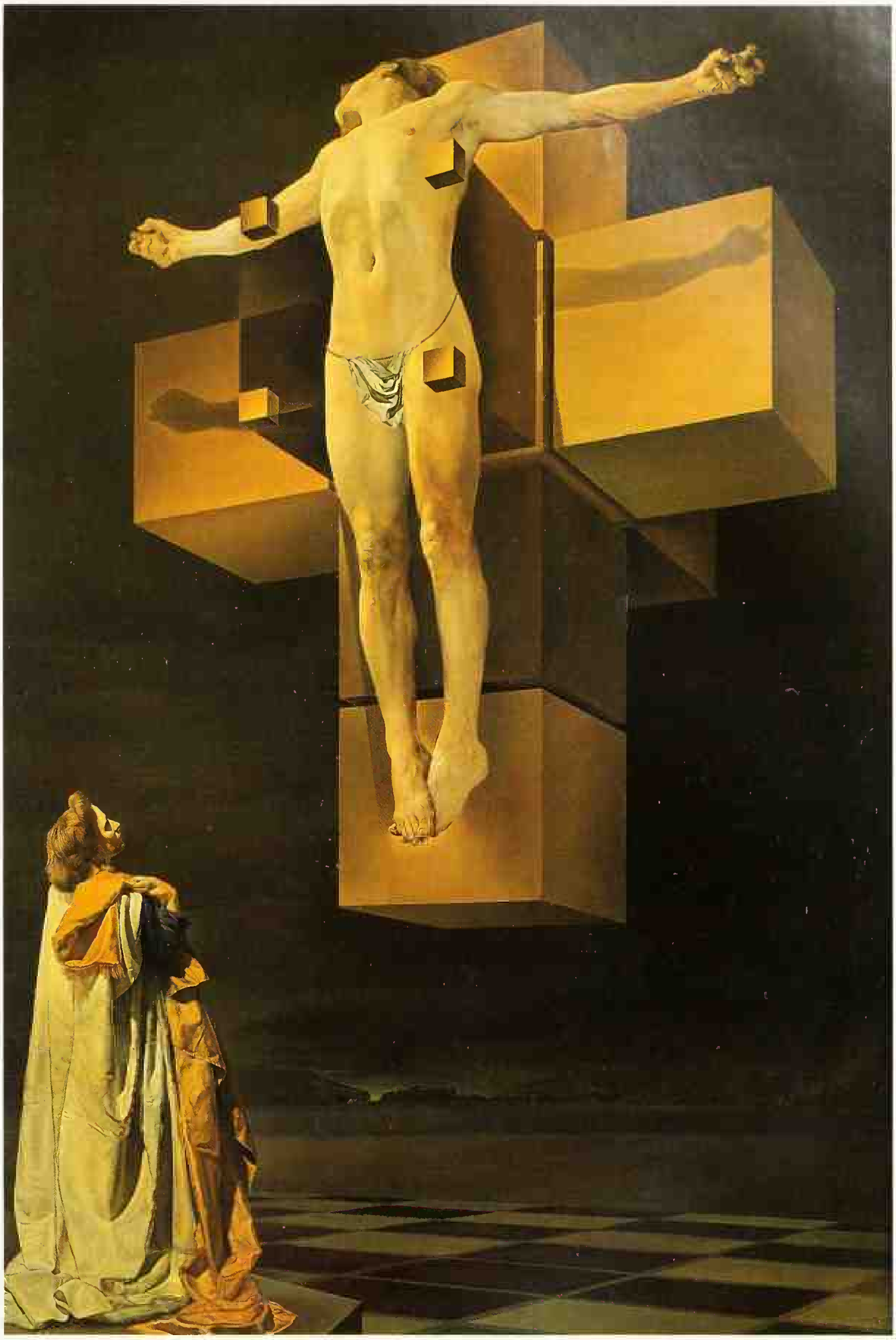
By 1986, 47 authors had published eports detailing the results of 42 ganzfeld xperiments. Honorton claimed that the uccessful ESP results of many of these tudies were extremely unlikely to be due o chance, but a debate opened in the *Journal of Parapsychology* between him nd a critic, Ray Hyman, over the possi-ility of flaws in the original studies, and laws in Honorton's statistical analysis. In he same journal, Robert Rosenthal, an ndependent statistician expert in the tech-iques used to analyse groups of studies ike this, reported his own analysis of these tudies, and stated that (in the sub-group of 28 studies that gave enough information for his analysis to be conducted) the likelihood f the ESP hit rate being due to chance alone was 0.00000000000337 – in other words, very small indeed.

One question that has to be asked when evaluating such apparently impressive results is the number of unsuccessful studies that have not been published and are languishing in various researchers' file drawers – the 'file drawer problem'. If a sig-ificant number of unsuccessful studies has been conducted but not published, then the published studies will give an exaggerated mpression of the success of a particular technique.

However, it is possible to calculate the number of studies that would be required n order to 'cancel out' such strong effects. Rosenthal calculated that there would have to be 423 unreported studies to negate the significant effect from 28 ganzfeld studies. Given the relatively small number of parapsychologists, and given the fact that parapsychology journals usually publish results whether or not they are statistically significant (so long as the study is well-designed), it seems extremely unlikely that the significant results of the early ganzfeld studies are due to the file drawer problem.

Results from the Autoganzfeld

Perhaps the most important outcome of Honorton and Hyman's ganzfeld debate was that they published a joint paper giving detailed guidelines for methodological improvements that should be adopted by future ganzfeld researchers in order to strengthen the quality of their studies. Honorton and his colleagues then proceeded to incorporate these guidelines in developing a new ganzfeld methodology, the 'autoganzfeld'. Between 1983 and 1989, 11 experimental series were conducted by eight different researchers using the autoganzfeld. The main feature of the autoganzfeld was that the targets were stored on video tape, the sender and the receiver were sequestered in separate acoustically-isolated and electrically-shielded rooms, and a computer randomly selected and displayed the target to the sender while keeping the experimenter and any others involved blind as to the target identity.


Copyright © 1954 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Salvador Dali's 'Corpus Hypercubicus', subject of a successful autoganzfeld experiment

Half of the targets were 'dynamic', consisting of clips from movies, documentaries and cartoons, and half were 'static', consisting of photographs, art prints and advertisements. A target pool consisted of either four static or dynamic targets. In some of the experiments the receivers were novices, while in others they were experienced receivers. Sometimes the sender was a friend of the receiver, at other times a member of laboratory staff acted as sender. There were no unreported trials in the period discussed, so there is no file-drawer problem.

An analysis of the results of the autoganzfeld studies confirmed the findings of the earlier group of studies. The effects did not appear to depend on who was the experimenter. Experienced receivers had higher ESP scores than novice receivers. The autoganzfeld series also replicated patterns found in the original ganzfeld database: ESP scores were higher when senders were receivers' friends than when lab staff acted as senders; scoring was far higher for the dynamic targets than for the static targets; and extraverted receivers scored more highly than receivers who were introverted.

It is sometimes difficult to gain an impression, from bald statistics, of the qualitative nature of the correspondences that can occur between mentation and target. Of course, striking correspondences can and do occur by chance alone, and to select an impressive example of a hit could give an exaggerated impression of the quality of the hits in the ganzfeld database as a whole. Bearing in mind these caveats, however, the following excerpt from a 1990 paper by Honorton and his colleagues gives some flavour of the dream-like quality of the receiver's mentation. The target was a reproduction of a painting by Salvador Dali in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, called 'Corpus Hypercubicus', the rest of the target pool comprising a Victorian 'saucy' postcard of a scantily-clad girl on a bicycle, a photograph of penguins on the Antarctic ice and a still-life of vegetables with a knife on a chopping-board. The target was judged to be correctly chosen as such based on this part of the receiver's mentation:

'...I think of guides, like spirit guides, leading me and I come into a court with a king. It's quiet...It's like heaven. The king is something like Jesus. Woman. Now I'm just sort of somersaulting through heaven ...brooding...Aztecs, the Sun God...High priest....fear....graves. Woman. Prayer ...funeral...dark. Death...souls....Ten Commandments. Moses...'

Perhaps more than any other body of ESP studies, those involving the ganzfeld have forced many scientists to sit up and take notice. The methodology is sophisticated and has been developed based on sound theoretical assumptions. In 1990, for the first time, a leading introductory psychology textbook contained a section on parapsychology, focusing on the ganzfeld technique. The standing of parapsychology does not rest on one set of studies alone though, and while the ganzfeld continues to evolve and to be tested by different researchers, parapsychologists have been exploring ESP using other methods.

Applying Meta-analysis

Researchers have begun to apply the statistical techniques used to analyse the ganzfeld studies to other sets of ESP studies. For a long time, parapsychologists have been faced with a fundamental difficulty: the small size of the ESP effect. In everyday life ESP can be quite dramatic, but effects in the laboratory are typically weak. This means that the chances of detecting the effect to a statistically significant degree in any one study can be quite small, especially if a study only has a few participants. However, recent developments in statistics have enabled the analysis of groups of similar studies, using techniques of meta-analysis. Often, an individual study can reveal an effect that is in the predicted direction, but that does not reach statistical significance. However, in many cases meta-analyses have shown that, taken together, such studies do have non-trivial effects; in other cases, meta-analyses have shown that effects are artificial.

The ganzfeld studies typically involve free-response telepathy methods; however, other methods exist. Between 1935 and 1987, 62 senior authors reported the results of 309 studies using forced-choice precognition methods, where the target material was randomly selected after the subject attempted to predict what it would be. More than 50,000 subjects performed almost two million individual trials, and the time delay in selecting the target ranged from under a second to one year. Overall, there was a very small but highly significant effect that was not due to just a few investigators. When the studies were coded for the number of methodological flaws they contained, it was found that the least flawed studies had the highest precognition effect size, contrary to suggestions by critics. Studies conducted with previously successful percipients were more successful than those with unselected percipients.

Extraverts and Introverts

The ganzfeld ESP studies showed that those receivers who were extraverted (that is, who were outgoing and comfortable in social situations) tended to have higher free-response scores than introverts (who prefer quietness and solitude). Would this finding generalise to the wider body of ESP studies, including forced-choice research? Sixty studies by 17 investigators were conducted from 1945 to 1983. For the free-response studies, there was a consistent and significant relationship between extraversion and ESP scores. At first there appeared to be a similar relationship for forced-choice studies, which use quite different techniques to the free-response studies. On closer inspection, though, it was discovered that the relation between extraversion and forced-choice was only found in those studies that gave the subjects feedback on their ESP results before they were tested for extraversion. When extraversion was tested before subjects knew their forced-choice ESP results, there was no difference between the performance of extraverts and introverts. In other words, if subjects are told they have done well at a forced-choice ESP task and are then tested for extraversion, this feedback seems temporarily to inflate their extraversion scores.

It has also been consistently found that if participants have practised mental disciplines such as meditation, relaxation, or yoga, and if they have had previous ESP experiences, then they are likely to do well at ESP tasks. This is particularly the case if these individuals also show a particular profile when they take personality tests. Findings such as these are sufficiently reliable that parapsychologists can quite confidently predict in advance those participants whom they would expect to do well in ESP experiments.

One of the most consistent findings in experimental parapsychology is known as the 'sheep-goat effect': subjects' beliefs in and attitudes towards ESP seem to be related to their performance. Those who doubt the existence of ESP and who do not think they could demonstrate the faculty under experimental conditions (known as 'goats') often do badly at ESP tasks, scoring often significantly below chance expectation. In other words, the goats seem to be using their ESP to avoid hitting the target so as to confirm their beliefs. The 'sheep', on the other hand, who believe that ESP exists and that they can use it in the experimental task, tend to score positively in such tasks. Like the goats, the sheep seem to be confirming their expectations of the experimental outcome.

The picture that is emerging of parapsychology in the 1990s is that, while laboratory psi effects are often small, they do appear with a variety of experimental techniques, and they are not dependent on a small number of 'star' subjects, experimenters, or laboratories.

The field of parapsychology has come a long way since the early days of investigating mediums who produced strange physical effects like cold breezes, levitating tables, materialised spirits, and ectoplasm. Nowadays such phenomena are almost unheard of. Perhaps the greater sophistication of today's researchers into how such effects may be produced fraudulently has stifled the appearance of such dramatic phenomena. Today, effects are small-scale, usually only detectable with the aid of statistics.

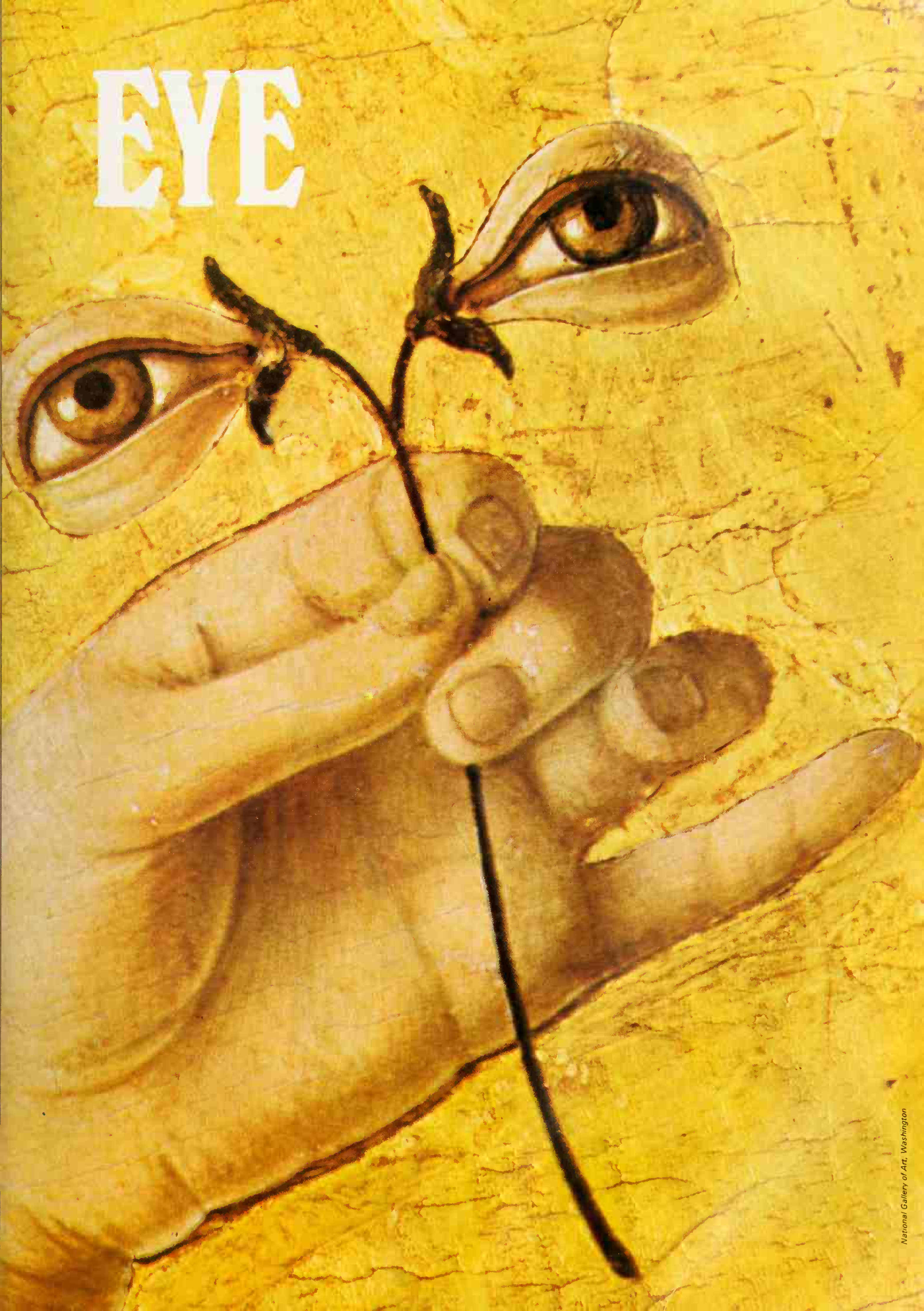
Some researchers regret the loss of the early phenomena, and consider that the artificial conditions of the laboratory are 'throwing the baby out with the bath water'. On the other hand, the laboratory studies are helping parapsychologists to learn more about how ESP works, and the careful control of laboratory conditions enables them to be more confident in the validity of their findings.

The study of ESP in everyday life is still going on, and laboratory researchers must take care not to forget the natural manifestations of the phenomenon that give meaning to the findings of lab research. At the same time, there is a growing understanding of the ways in which individuals may deceive themselves, or be deceived by others, into thinking that they have experienced ESP. This happens most easily in the complex and often confusing conditions of daily life, and represents a valid topic of study in itself. Spontaneous psi experiences are quite common, and whether or not they represent the operation of 'genuine' psi, there can be no doubt that they have formed an important part of the human condition from the earliest times.

CAROLINE A. WATT

FURTHER READING: Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (Schocken Books, 1968); J.B. Rhine and others, *Extrasensory Perception after Sixty Years* (Branden); H.L. Edge, R.L. Morris, J. Palmer and J.H. Rush, *Foundations of Parapsychology* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986); Richard Broughton, *Parapsychology: the Controversial Science* (Rider, 1991). For a full discussion of Honorton's experiments with the autoganzfeld, see *Journal of Parapsychology* (1990), vol 54, 99-139.

EYE



National Gallery of Art, Washington

The eye can stand for intelligence and spirituality in symbolism but it is also an emblem of terror, from the destroying eye of the sun to the dreaded Evil Eye of folklore

THE GLITTERING EYE of the ancient mariner in Coleridge's poem compelled the wedding guest to listen in spite of himself, and in literature a profusion of eyes that are bright, melting, twinkling, hard, commanding, suggest the effectiveness of the human eye in conveying emotions and influencing others. The importance of the eye in magic and symbolism stems from the fact that your eyes not only enable you to see but allow you to affect what you see, to organize the world outside you into shapes and patterns, to bend or persuade other people to your will (see BODY).

The eye is frequently connected with the sun (and sometimes with the moon) as the all-seeing eye that watches the world. The sun is the universe's source of light and the human eyes with which we see are like suns, lighting up the world about us. Light is itself a symbol of intelligence and spirituality, and if the sun is an eye, the eye is correspondingly a sun and stands for mental and spiritual 'vision'.

Deities and semi-divine beings are sometimes shown with several eyes as a mark of their all-seeing, and therefore all-knowing vision and power. The Babylonian god Marduk had four eyes. The Egyptian Bes had eyes all over her body and Isis was called 'many-eyed'.

In the Bible the ruins of the four wheels of Ezekiel's vision (chapter 1) 'were full of eyes round about'. In the vision of Zechariah (chapter 4) the seven lamps of the lampstand were 'the eyes of the Lord which range through the whole earth'. In Revelation (chapter 4) the four cherubim are 'full of eyes all round and within' and the Lamb of God (chapter 5) has seven horns and seven eyes, the horns for strength and the eyes for omniscience.

A great multiplicity of eyes sometimes stands for the stars which watch in the night sky, as in the case of the Indian god Varuna who had a thousand eyes. A French Tarot card shows the Devil with eyes all over his body, presumably a reference to the fallen angels, the Watchers, who were the stars which the Devil dragged down from the sky in the book of Revelation (see DEVIL; LUCIFER). Modern Cabalists, including Aleister Crowley, have also connected the Devil with the eye, by linking the Devil of the Tarot pack with the Hebrew letter *ayin* (our O) which is traditionally supposed to represent an eye.

The Third Eye

An eye shown in some abnormal position on the body may stand for supernormal sight, clairvoyant vision and power. In Hindu theory each man has a third eye, concealed from normal view, which is a channel of great hidden power. It is in the middle of the forehead, just above the point where the eyebrows meet, at the place where caste marks are made and where married women wear a red, yellow or white spot. The third eye of the God Shiva, th creator and destroyer, could wither th entire universe in its flame.

On the other hand, a creature with les than the proper complement of eyes, lik the one-eyed Cyclops of Greek mythology is likely to be an embodiment of subnorma vision and wisdom, brutish stupidity. W still use the expression 'one-eyed' for something substandard, as in a 'one-eyed town'

Lady of Slaughter

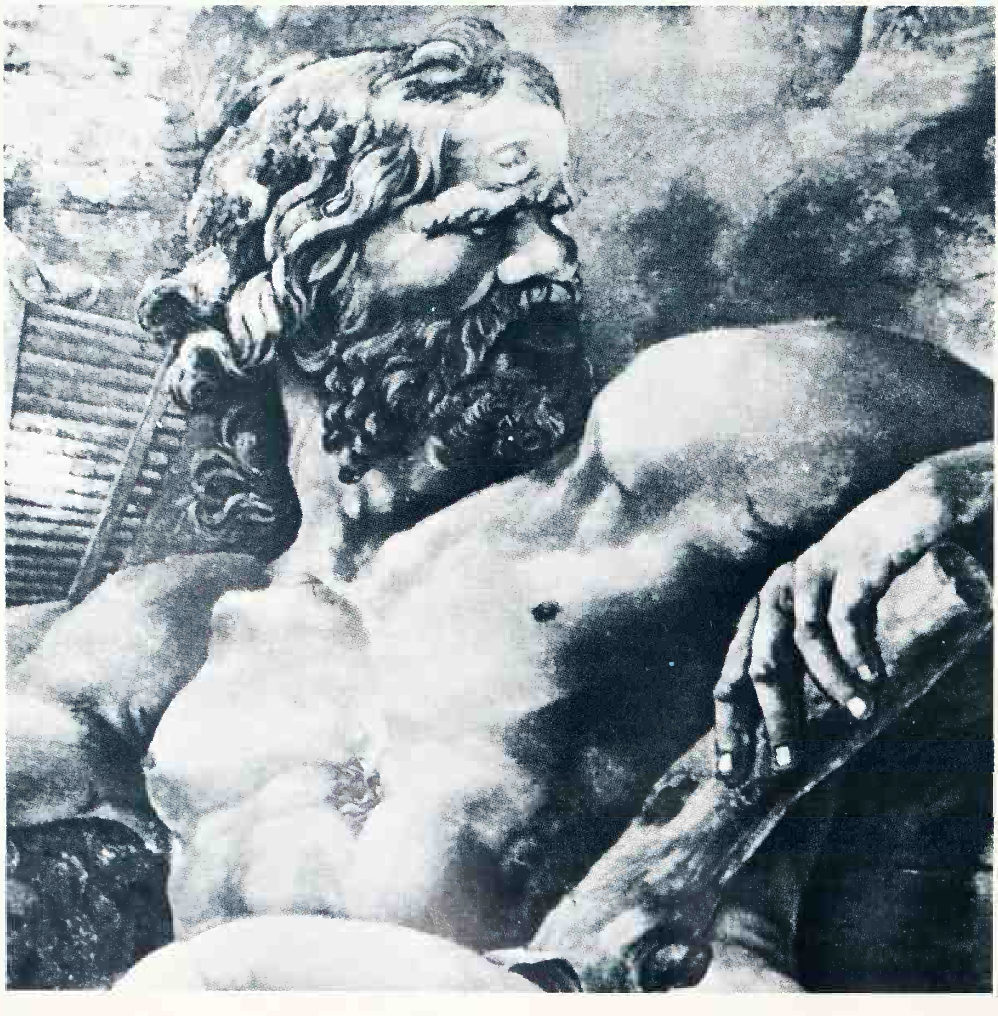
The eye has a particularly important plac in ancient Egyptian symbolism, usually i some connection with the sun which playe a dominating role in the everyday life o Egypt and in Egyptian religion (see EGYPT) Many Egyptians wore an amulet called the Uzat-eye, made of gold, silver, precious stones or wood, and giving its weare health, strength and well-being, the vigou of the life-giving sun.

In mythology, the evil god Seth tore out the eye of the god Horus. When Horus went to look for his dead father, Osiris, t restore him to life he took the eye with him and presented it to Osiris. As soon as Osiris was given the eye, he 'became a soul' o received new life in the afterworld, and s the eye of Horus became a symbol of the funeral rites which a son should provide for his dead father. Twin eyes frequently keep watch from the sides of Egyptian coffins, protecting the dead from harm.

The eye could also be a symbol of the sun's destructive power, of blasting and withering heat. One of the Pyramid Texts refers to a time when 'that fear did not exist that came into being through the eye of Horus'. In a coffin text the eye says o itself: 'I am the all-seeing Eye of Horus, whose appearance strikes terror, Lady o Slaughter, Mighty One of Frightfulness.'

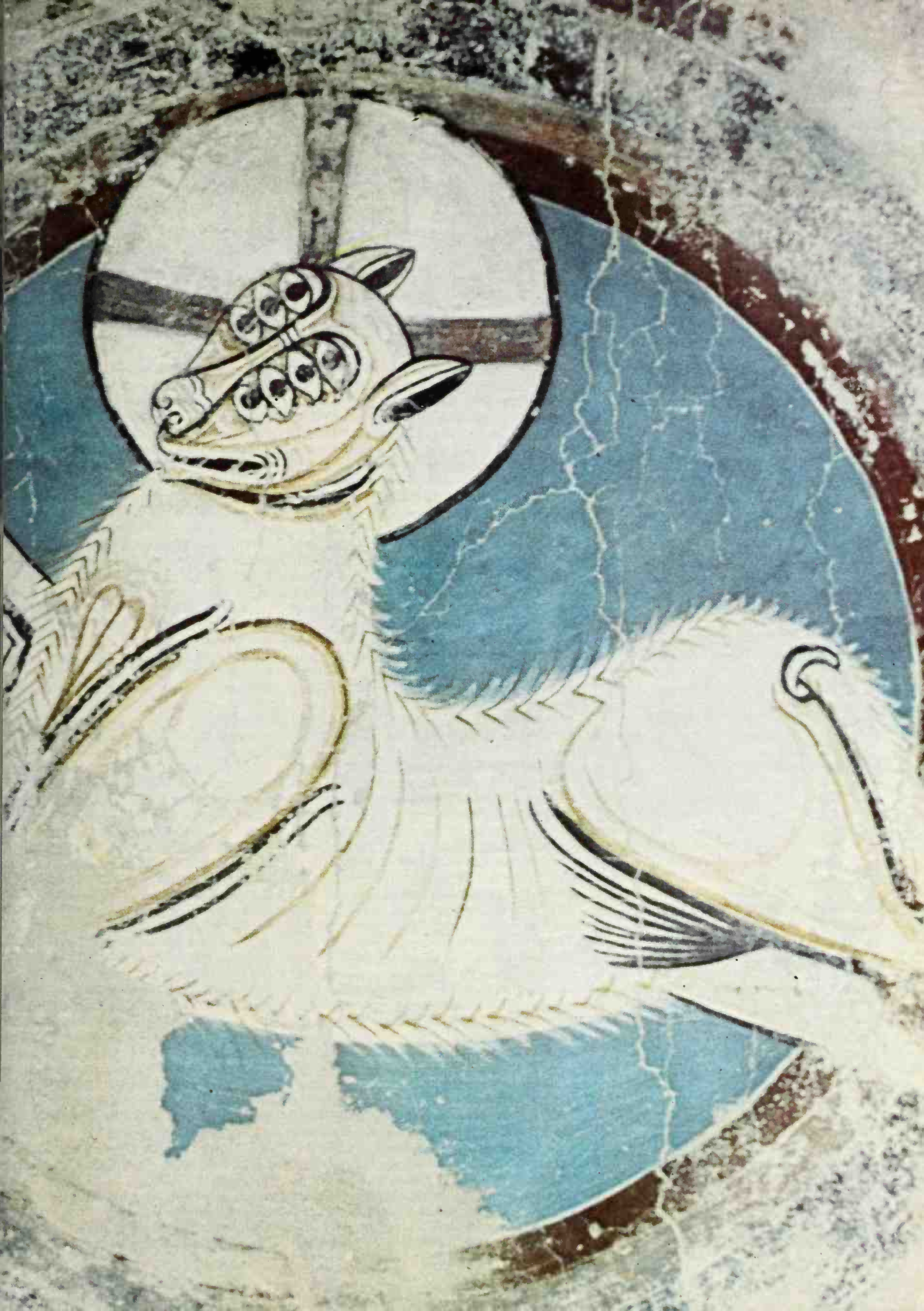
Before 2000 BC the myth had developed that human beings had plotted against the sun god, who sent his Eye to punish them. It came upon them in the form of the goddess Hathor who slaughtered men i droves and would have exterminated mankind altogether if the sun god had no distracted her attention by making he drunk on beer.

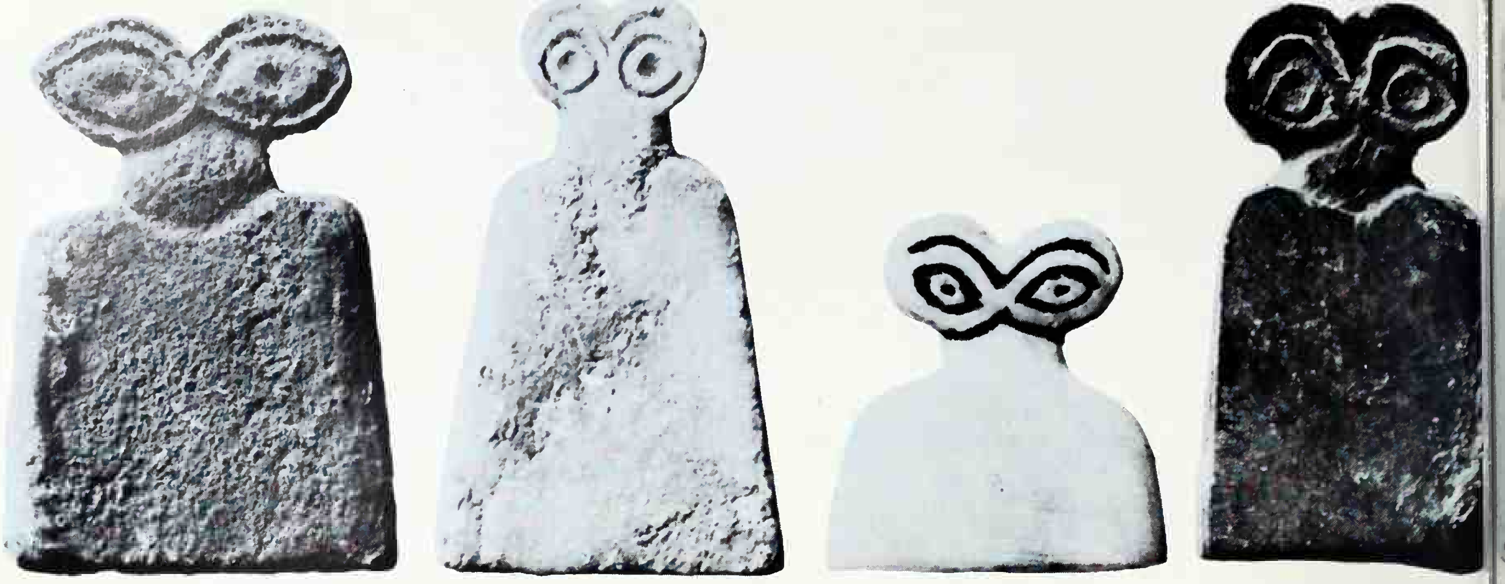
According to one version of the creation myth of Heliopolis (see CREATION MYTHS), when the god Atum had created two othe deities, Shu and Tefnut, the three of them lay embraced, locked together in the primeval waters. But this divine unity disintegrated, for Shu and Tefnut became separated from Atum, drifted away and were lost in the abyss. Atum sent his Eye



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Previous page **The eyes of Santa Lucia o Syracuse were invoked against blindness detail from a painting by Francesco del Cossa *Left* Polyphemus, a one-eyed Cyclops o Greek mythology: creatures with only one eye were generally considered to be stupid and aggressive: detail from a fresco by the Italian artist Giulio Romano *Right* In the book o Revelation the Lamb of God is described as having seven eyes, standing for all-knowing vision and power: 12th century painting o the arch of a church at San Clemente de Tahull in Spain**





to find them and they returned with the Eye. Atum wept over them and man came into being from the tears of his Eye: this is partly a pun on the Egyptian words for 'men' and 'tears' but possibly also a lingering trace of the old connection between eyes and the great goddess, the mother of all living things (see below).

The Eye was furious with rage when it returned because Atum had put another eye in its place. To pacify it Atum placed the Eye on the front of his face, where it would rule the entire world. In other words, it became the uraeus, the rearing swollen-necked cobra placed at the front of the royal crown of Egypt. The Eye was the ruling sun in the sky and Pharaoh, the human sun, on earth. 'The Eye is personified might', says R. T. Rundle Clark, 'the essential violence that is used to protect the gods and kings against disintegration in the waters or spirit enemies in the created world.'

RICHARD CAVENDISH

The Eye Goddess

When an ancient Mesopotamian site at Tell Brak, in the Khabur valley, was excavated in 1937–8 by Professor M. E. L. Mallowan, the remains of a temple were found which has become known as the Eye Temple of Brak. The reason for this designation was the discovery of thousands of 'eye idols' in the temple, made of black and white alabaster. Their general form is that of a thin biscuit-like body surmounted by a pair of eyes. But there are variations: some specimens have two pairs of eyes placed side by side or one above the other; another type comprises two smaller eye idols superimposed on a larger one; others have crown or caps upon the head-knob. Somewhat similar objects have been found at certain other Mesopotamian sites, Ur, Mari and Lagash. These examples are of a similar design, having the same biscuit-like body surmounted by a pair of open loops which has caused them to be called 'spectacle idols'.

There has been much discussion about the meaning and purpose of these strange objects. That they had some cultic significance is obvious. Various explanations have been suggested: that they are votive offerings, representing themselves, made by devotees to the deity worshipped in the temple; that they are images of an all-seeing god who watched over the inhabitants of the city; that they depict a goddess. The last suggestion seems to be the best supported, and the goddess concerned has been identified with Ninhursag, the Sumerian goddess of childbirth, since one eye idol has been found engraved with the form of a stag, with a bird on its back, which was a symbol of this goddess.

If the identification is sound, this association of the Sumerian mother goddess with the symbol of a pair of eyes represents the earliest phase of a long traditon of such eye symbolism. The Brak Eye Temple dates from c 3000 BC. From the middle of the third millennium BC onwards the symbol, usually consisting of two eyes divided by a beak-like nose, can be traced westwards, mostly connected with megalithic culture, through Anatolia, Cyprus, Crete, Greece, Sicily, Malta, Italy, Spain, Brittany, Ireland and Britain. A striking British example is provided by two chalk-drums, found in an Early Bronze Age grave at Folkton, Yorkshire, dating c 1900–1700 BC.

Why the mother goddess should have been represented by a pair of eyes is unknown. The symbol appears on a great variety of objects, on crudely anthropoid images, pots, standing stones and rocks. The attribution of many eyes to deities, doubtless to symbolize their all-seeing power, has been a widespread custom.

S. G. F. BRANDON

The Evil Eye

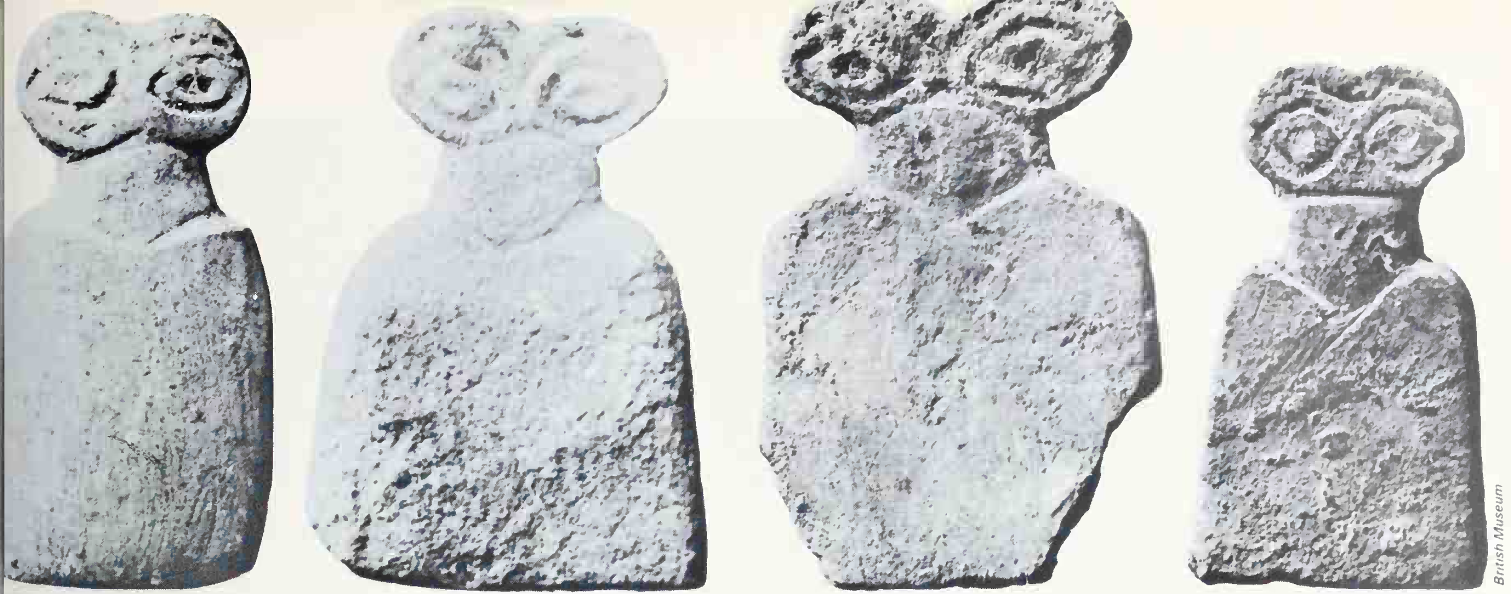
The expression 'if looks could kill . . .' contains an echo of a very primitive and ancient fear of being watched, perhaps unaware, by an enemy. In ancient times man had not only to fear the gaze of his mortal enemies but also the watchfulness of the gods who might be envious. To primitive man, Nature is a capricious, vengeful and above all jealous god, perpetually seeking to regain from the hunter or farmer the riches so hardly won from the earth. Even the deserts were once assumed to be populated by hostile demons whose looks could, quite literally, kill; according to Pliny, Libya was once the domain of the basilisk whose eyes possessed such devastating power that it would itself die if it saw its reflection in a mirror.

From the idea that the eyes of envious gods, of demons and monsters had t
power to harm developed the terrifyi
belief that the human eye could emit a r
which under certain circumstances cou
be highly dangerous to the person on whc
it was focused – particularly if the onlook
was malicious or jealous. An attack of tl
kind was usually anticipated at the bir
of a child, or on those rare occasions wh
man seemed temporarily to have overcor
the hostile forces surrounding him.

The Evil Eye took two distinct form
the one voluntary, which was inspired
malice, and the other involuntary, ov
which the unfortunate possessor had
control: animals were often suspected
possessing an involuntary Evil Eye, ar
the sorcerers of Central American India
tribes were kept especially busy counte
acting the effects of the involuntary so
Presence of the power in an individual w
usually shown by some abnormality–crosse
or diverging eyes, one eye set above tl
other, or eyes of contrasting colours. Tl
English scholar Walter Map (c 114
c 1209) wrote of Scythian women who ha
two pupils in one eye and the figure of
horse in the other, a truly frighteni
combination. While some in the We
might adhere to the old proverb 'In tl
country of the blind the one-eyed man
king', in India any individual so afflicte
was shunned like a pariah. Those unfort
nates whose eyebrows happened to me
above the nose were regarded everywhe
with utter dismay. (This feature has oth
associations: it is seen as the mark of
murderer in America, but of a werewolf
most of Europe.) Others whose physic
deformities were believed to indicate tl
ownership of an Evil Eye were hunchbac
and dwarfs. The glance of a woman whe
pregnant or in her menses was equal
dangerous.

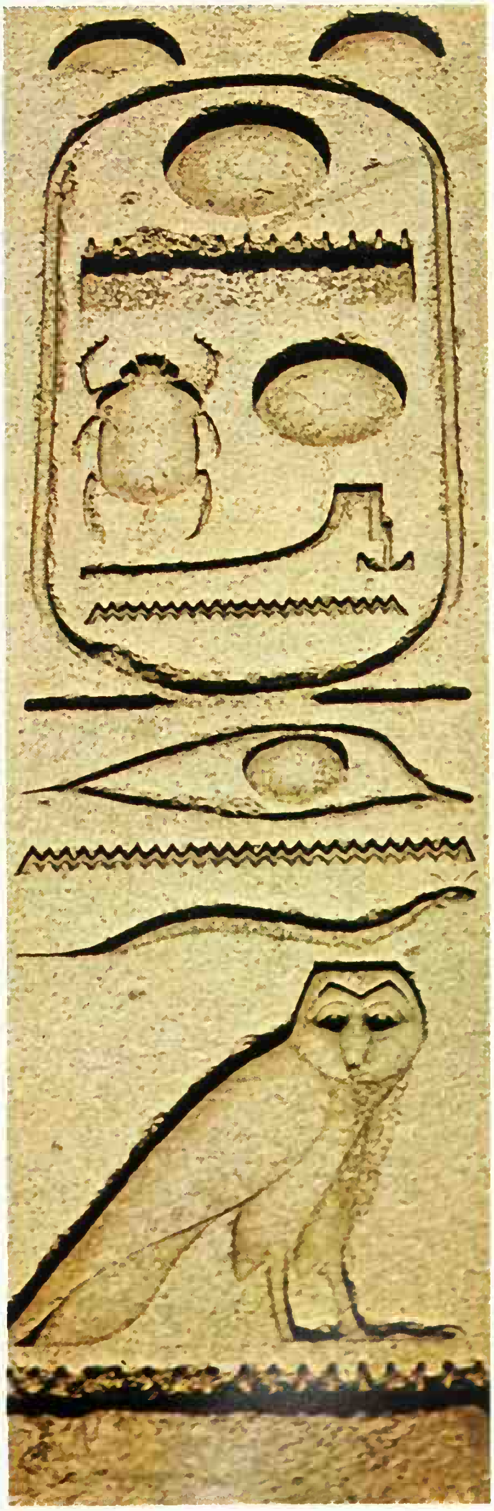
To a victim of the Evil Eye it must ha
been of little consequence whether the caus
of the affliction was due to malice or othe
wise, since the consequences were identic
– ruin, sickness or death.

It excited the most terror when its effec
were thought likely to cause the greate
disaster. The most vulnerable in tl
community were the most precious, your
children and farm stock – especially tl
one cow or pig that would be the mainsta
of many poor backwoods American farms.



British Museum

Above **The thousands of 'eye idols' discovered at the ancient Mesopotamian site at Tell Brak are thought to represent an all-seeing mother goddess *Right* The ancient Egyptians held the eye in particular esteem and often equated it with the sun, believing it to have both the life-giving properties of the sun's rays and the withering power of its heat: detail from an Egyptian obelisk in Istanbul showing the sacred eye**



C. M. Dixon

In modern Italy the term for the Evil Eye the '*malocchio*', in France the '*mauvais il*' and in Germany '*bose Blick*'. The old rd 'fascination' has long been superseded nong English-speaking peoples by the m 'overlooked' and even this is rapidly coming extinct. The Jews, inspired no ubt by the biblical proverb 'Eat thou not e bread of him that hath an evil eye' roverbs 26.3 in the Authorized Version), this day remain wary of the *ayn-hara*.

The immediate effect of a blast from the il Eye upon a victim involved not only isfortunes of every kind but the infliction the worst diseases, often leading to death. ne sexual organs were particularly liable psychic assaults of this character and most as a matter of course impotence and gidity were ascribed to the jealous eyes some rival. Minor disorders such as adache and hiccups were common signs having been overlooked. There once isted a curious belief that if the Evil ye of the moon were cast upon a pregnant oman she would give birth to a monster.

ed Into Court Backwards

he situation of the involuntary possessor the Evil Eye could become extremely ecarious during phases of witch mania. his became apparent during the trial of e Malmesbury, Wiltshire witches in the 7th century, when the various forms of itchcraft came under discussion; even en, however, it seems to have been nerally agreed that an individual so flicted was more to be pitied than conemned. Two examples quoted were those a man named Lee, of Christian Malford, ear Chippenham, who had been responsible r destroying his own cattle 'by his natural il look' and farmer Snigg of the adjoining rish whose children were appallingly thin d apparently wasting away from the fects of their father's loving gaze. In a urce quoted by Christina Hole in her *ncyclopaedia of Superstitions* reference is ade to a Yorkshireman whose eyes were such potency that he found it necessary direct 'the first glance of the morning', enerally agreed to be the most lethal, upon pear tree which, as a result, gradually ithered and died.

Any individual held responsible for flicting the Evil Eye out of malice might nd himself indicted for witchcraft during the 16th and 17th century witch-hunting manias, for it was then the fashionable doctrine that witches derived the power to cast spells with their eyes as the result of a compact with Satan. The *Malleus Maleficarum* handbook of the Continental Inquisition laid it down that 'there are witches who can bewitch their judges by a mere look or glance from their eyes . . .' and it was for this reason that those charged with this crime were generally led into court backwards.

The close identification of the Evil Eye with witchcraft persisted in folk belief well into the 19th century. In America, New Hampshire legend tells of an old woman who took revenge on a household that would not make a breakfast for her. One glance from her eye and the doors of the house would not open, nor could anyone hear the householders' calls for an entire day. Other New England tales refer to witches killing pigs, breaking the yokes on oxen, preventing the secure tying of a horse, afflicting butter churns and so on – all with little more than a glare.

Occasionally the power of the Evil Eye was thought to need reinforcing: in parts of Britain, it was said that nine toads strung together and buried alive would aid the power. Nanny Morgan, a Shropshire witch who was murdered in 1857 was believed to keep a box of toads under her bed, to strengthen her eye.

Scotland was equally worried about the Evil Eye. If a stranger was seen examining a farmer's cattle, he would be offered some of the milk as an assurance against disaster. During childbirth a mother's house would be sprinkled with urine to defend against overlooking. If the Evil Eye was suspected, it could be offset by burning cloth cut from the witch's coat.

A community would usually defend itself from the Evil Eye by private rites and psychic defences, without recourse to the magical specialist. Among the most common was disguise of those considered to be specially vulnerable, which ranged from plastering a newborn child with mud or soot in order to render it unworthy of the jealousy of the supernatural powers, to dressing the boys of the household – these being the most valuable – in the clothing of their sisters to deceive the spirits. Another example of disguise was the bridal veil which is still regarded as affording protection against the envious, and therefore hostile, eyes by many communities.

Plants were also used for psychic protection, including sage and rosemary, in Spain and Portugal, garlic in Greece, and the shamrock in Ireland. The human body provided its own defence in the form of spittle, a universal panacea; to spit three times was considered a particularly powerful safeguard, as was the act of making the sign of the cross upon a child's forehead with the tongue. Artificial aids were also employed such as the wearing of little bells by children and cattle and the carrying of salt, symbol of eternal life, in the pocket.

Phallic Teething Rings

The first glance of the Evil Eye, especially if delivered from an oblique angle, was always the most dangerous. A precaution against this attack was to wear an amulet with a grotesque design of a toad or hunchback to distract the glance from the human being and to absorb its venom. Based on a different principle was the choice of the pig as a motif since this animal was known to be extremely vulnerable to the Evil Eye. The ancient Greeks wore the amulet of the Medusa, and the caduceus, the traditional wand or staff of the god Mercury, which protected him from the Evil Eye of the gods, was naturally a great favourite. The male genitals, symbols of the life-force, were pitted against the enemies of life – corruption and death – in the form of gold, silver or bronze phalli worn by the Romans, while babies were given coral phalli to use as teething rings. Beads bearing the design of the human eye were also worn. The fleur-de-lys, another symbolic barrier against the Evil Eye, became also the emblem of the white witches in parts of France. A curious example of a latter-day amulet was the necklace of white nuts, known as mullaska beans, which was hung around the necks of young children in the Isle of Harris. It was assumed that the beads would turn black if the child were ever in danger of being overlooked.

Far older and best known are the manual gestures still used as an act of psychic defiance, the most popular being the *mano fica* in which the thumb is inserted between the first and second fingers with the fist clenched, and the *mano cornuta*, known as 'making the devil's horns', in which the two middle fingers are held down by the thumb and the first and little fingers are raised.

Psychic protection could also be secured by employing certain colours, words or designs. The Turks inscribed passages from the Koran upon the outer walls of th houses and suspended magical globes fr their ceilings and from the caparisons their horses. Coloured glass spheres kno as witch balls performed a similar functi in rural England. Blue beads seem to ha been employed all over southern Euro for the protection of humans and domes animals. An eye symbol was often tattoo on the back of a child or painted upon t prow of the fisherman's boat. Americ lore recommends a heart-shaped locket brooch as a protection – or, oddly, a r spot painted on the forehead.

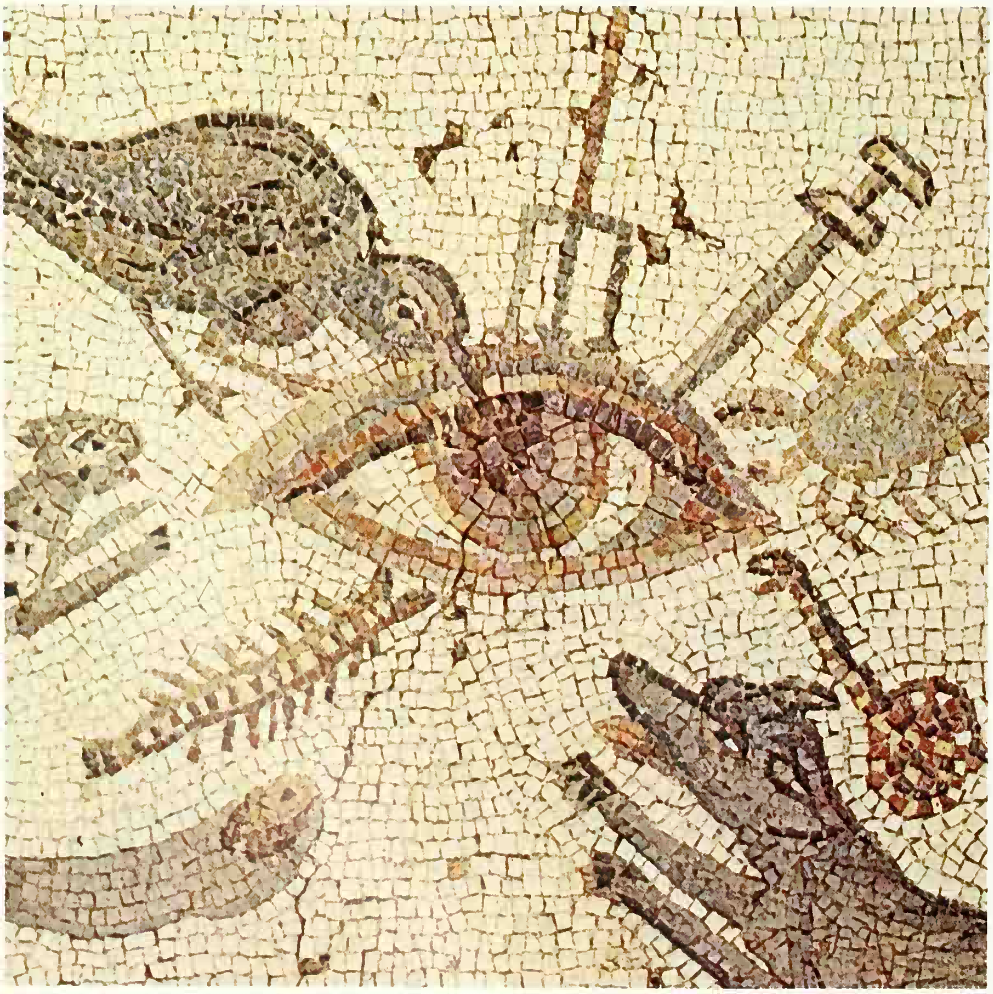
In England, in former times, the cautio householder placed a red ribbon over h front door, and ribbons of this colour we attached by the Scots to the tails of catt A reminder of the symbolic importan attached to the colour red is contained the well-known lines:

> Rowan tree and red thread
> Will put the witches to their speed.

To achieve the maximum defence it w advisable to tie the thread in magical kno accompanied by an incantation. The pow inherent in sacred or magical words, wheth pronounced by the private individual the specialist magician, provided anoth useful antidote to the malicious or injurio glance, as did special prayers and counte charms which were inscribed upon pap and worn in small containers upon t body. Known as phylacteries, these we very likely the ancestors of the mode locket.

Dangerous Praise

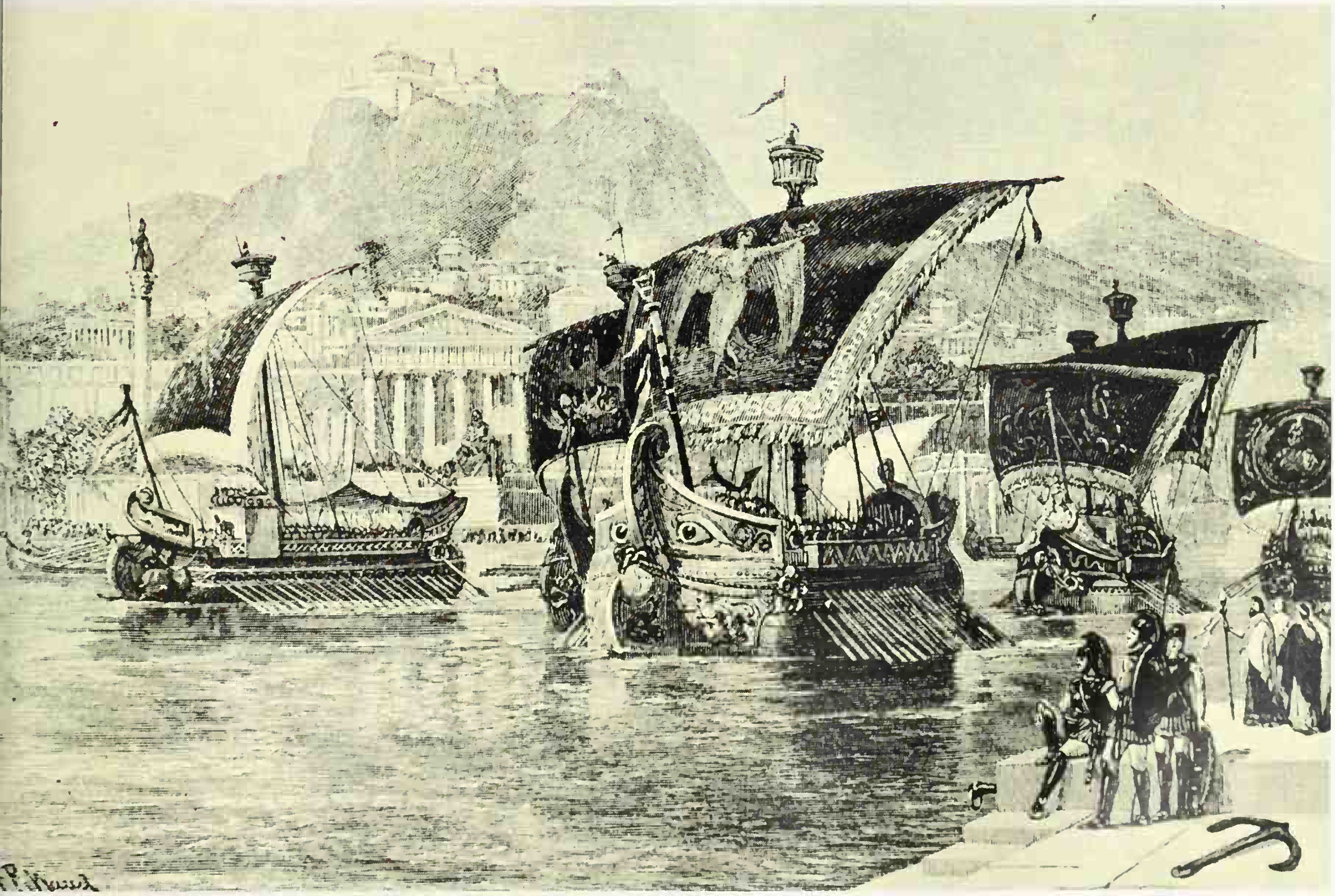
When complimenting a fortunate person, was always necessary to be extremely caref with one's choice of words, since all forn of congratulation were likely to provo hostile intervention from the jealous deiti of fate. To express admiration of a herd cattle would be tantamount to inviting i destruction. Even to remark favourably a child's beauty could be disastrous; hen it was customary to speak disparagingly it to the parents, who would be prepared necessary to counter the malice of the go by spitting judiciously. This curious proce has been described by W. G. Sumner i *Folkways* (1959) as 'the Doctrine Offsets – an artificial effect which will ave fascination', in the hope of offsetting th jealousies of both gods and men. At moder horse shows it is not unknown for owne to say 'break a leg' if they consider the entry likely to gain a prize. Vituperatio



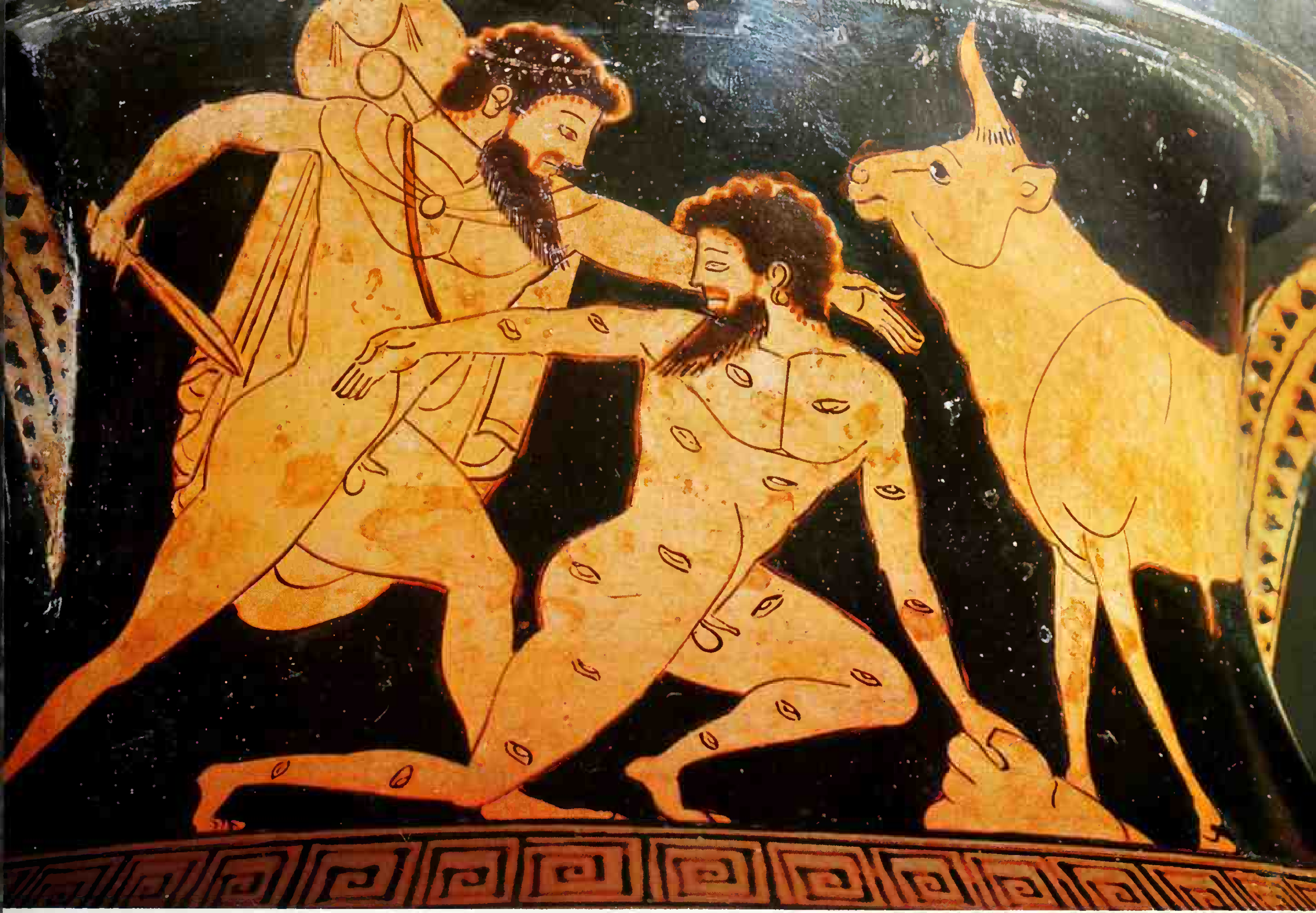
Sonia Halliday

***Left* The immediate effect of a blast from th Evil Eye upon a victim involved not onl misfortunes of every kind but the infliction the worst diseases, often leading to deat the Evil Eye, a detail from a mosai in the Antioch Museum *Above right* Fishe men often painted eyes on the prows of the boats to avert the dangers of the Evil Ey and to ensure a good catch: model of Portuguese trawler, now in the Scienc Museum, London *Below right* Similarl oracular eyes were fitted by Athene to th prow of Jason's ship, the *Argo*, to help hi in his search for the Golden Fleece**

Science Museum



Mansell Collection



A self-styled Italian wizard attempted to bring occult influences to bear in support of his favourite football team, by putting the Evil Eye upon their opponents

nd ribaldry, which in other circumstances vould never have been tolerated for a noment, were used in the past against ational leaders in their hour of glory to leflect the Evil Eye of the jealous onlooker r tribal god. Hence it was customary for oldiers in the triumphal procession of ome Roman general to recite derisive erses drawing attention to his personal shortcomings and physical defects, to the delight of the otherwise envious crowd.

eft Many people have a superstitious orror of peacock feathers because the yes in the tail remind them of the lreaded Evil Eye *Above* According to a reek legend, after the death of the undred-eyed Argus, the goddess Hera laced his eyes in the tail of the peacock o spy on her husband Jupiter

A direct appeal for intervention of the gods as a form of protection against the Evil Eye was integral in certain religious rites; whereas the Greek and Roman would address himself to Nemesis, the Christian made his appeal to St Nicholas of Myra, patron saint of children, whose picture was painted upon the walls of churches, affording protection to all who looked upon it.

One of the most ancient remedies for those who had been overlooked known to man is a form of transference, by which the affliction is passed on to another, by some means. Among the southern Slavs, the victim of the Evil Eye would ceremonially wash himself in water in which a copper coin had been placed, and, after muttering an incantation, charitably present the money to a blind beggar – hoping thereby to transfer the affliction with the coin.

To meet a cross-eyed person is still regarded as unlucky in some places, particularly by fishermen and miners and others in dangerous trades. In the theatrical profession, which is notorious for its superstitions because of a different kind of insecurity, many actors maintain a tenacious objection to the presence of peacocks' feathers on the stage, the eyes in the tail being reminiscent of Juno's jealous eye. The peacock was sacred to Juno who, after the death of hundred-eyed Argus, had his eyes put on the bird's tail so that they could keep a perpetual watch over

Egyptian eye, probably from the inside of a mummy case: eyes were often depicted on the sides of Egyptian coffins to protect the dead from harm

her husband Jupiter's amours. (In New York in 1965 the peacocks were removed from the lawns of the United Nations building, because they made some delegates uneasy.)

There is one positive use of crossed eyes, from American folklore. The most effectual rabbit's foot is said to come from a rabbit killed in a graveyard at midnight under a full moon by a cross-eyed (and sometimes red-headed) man.

Among famous men considered to possess the Evil Eye in the past were the Emperor Napoleon III of France, King Alphonso XIII of Spain and the poet Lord Byron. Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII were believed to be similarly afflicted, much to the alarm of their congregation. The Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, is on record as having refused to travel in the same plane as two deputies who were reported to have the Evil Eye. Modern examples crop up frequently in the newspapers. In 1957 it was disclosed in the United States that an unscrupulous company had employed a well-known *iettatore*, the Italian phrase for the possessor of the Evil Eye, 'to keep dissatisfied workers on the job'. More recently, in 1966, a self-styled Italian wizard attempted to bring occult influences to bear in support of his favourite football team, by putting the Evil Eye upon their opponents, the famous team 'Internazionale'.

The progress of medicine has led to the discarding of many of the absurd beliefs of the past, and the reduction or elimination of many of the optical disorders once regarded as infallible signs of the Evil Eye. Nevertheless, the old fears are not yet extinct, even in communities apparently dominated by scientific principles. Many school children believe in the Evil Eye and in Ireland the 'Eye of Balor' is still feared, inspired by the ancient legend of the giant Balor, King of the Fomorians, who possessed a single lethal eye.

Modern Views of the Evil Eye

The modern approach to the problems of belief in the Evil Eye is discussed in an interesting article 'Delusions of Witchcraft' by M. Risso and W. Böker, published in *The British Journal of Psychology* (114, 963–972) 1968. It appears that in Luciana in Spain, where the fear of fascination is extremely strong, 'the nursing mother can often be the victim of the Evil Eye which may charm the milk away from the breast. The cessation of lactation in an impoverished country where practically no substitute for mothers' milk can be made is a threatening event.'

The Evil Eye, it would appear from the study of the past and present evidence, is a phobia most prevalent in societies living at subsistence level, and among individuals afflicted with strong emotional disturbances. Its presence symbolizes the eternal anxieties produced by the never-ending contest between primitive man and his gods for the right to happiness. As Sumner said i *Folkways*: 'The evil eye is an afflictio that befalls the prosperous and fortunate i their prosperity . . . It is the irritate demons who inflict disaster at the heart goodluck.'

Certain psychologists have interprete the Evil Eye as representing 'aggressiv impulses turned inwardly, because of guilty need for self-punishment arising fro prohibited sexual urges', or as E. S. Giffor has said in *The Evil Eye*, it is the result neurotic guilt feelings since individuals i prosperity tend to project their expectatio of failure into the eyes of those whom the consider most likely to be envious. In thi sense we are all victims of the Evil Ey since it represents the envious demon calle fate who stands poised at the very momen of human triumph ready to hurl presumptuous man from the pinnacle of succes into the abyss of despair.

ERIC MAPL

FURTHER READING: J. Mercier, *Ethiopia Magic Scrolls* (Braziller, 1979); C. Maloney ed., *The Evil Eye* (Columbia Universit Press, 1976); L. DiStasi, *Mal Occhio, th Underside of Vision* (North Point Press 1981); M.E.L. Mallowan, *Early Mesopotamia and Iran* (McGraw-Hill, 1965); T Davidson, *Rowan Tree and Red Threa* (Clarke, Irwin, 1950); Alan Dundes, *Evi Eye* (Garland Publishing, 1981); W.G. Sumner, *Folkways* (Arno, 1979); E. Chaney an W. Messick, *Kundalini and the Third Ey* (Astara, 1980).

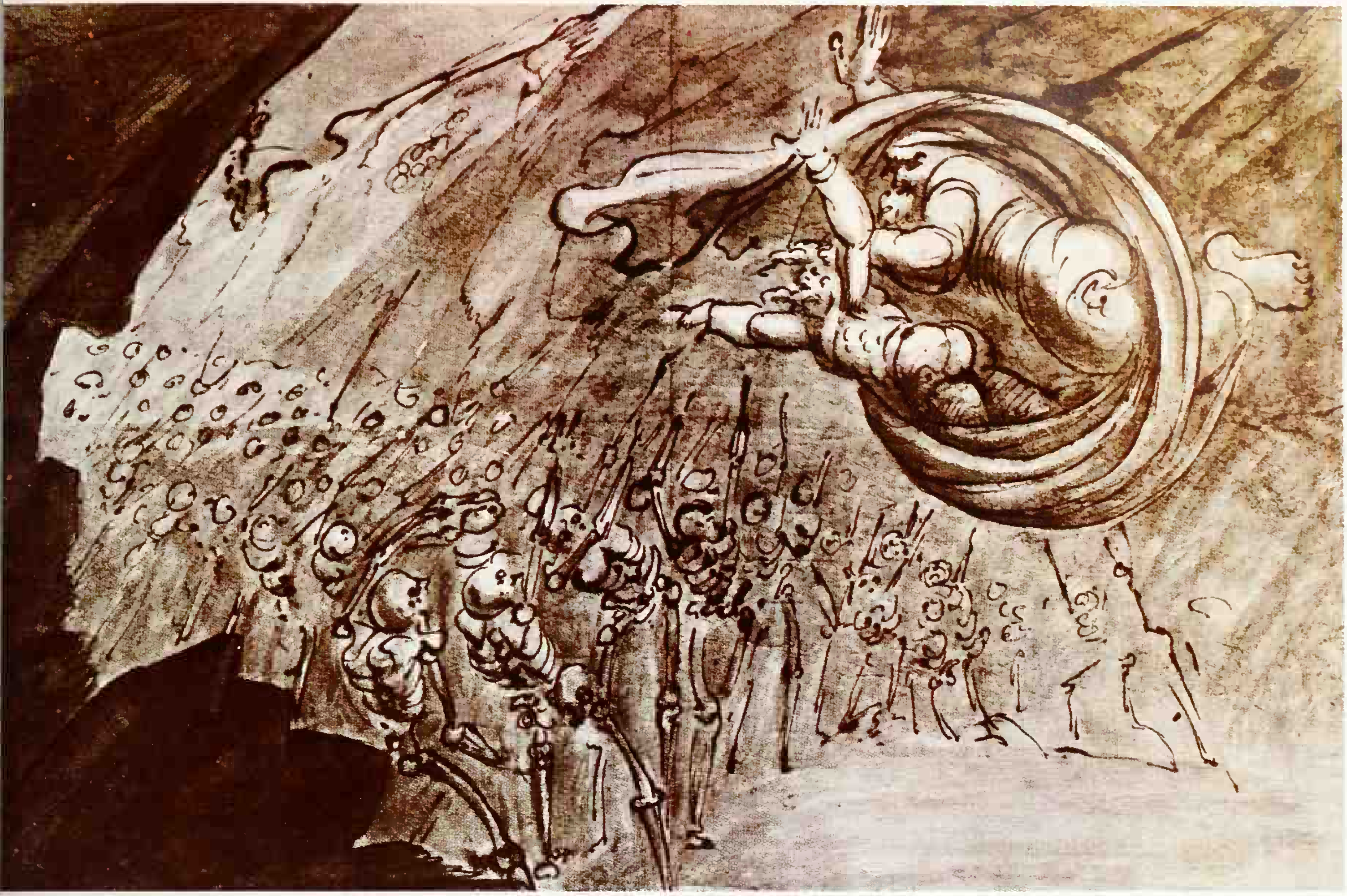
Eyeless in the Next World

The eye *(akshi)* is regarded as a receptive, neutral organ, except when intent is added to seeing. It is said to be the last organ to come into activity, since the child within the womb employs all its organs except the eyes, which it opens only after birth. On this analogy sculptors used to give the final touch to an image after the rest of the work was completed, in a ritual operation called *nayononmīlana* (*nayana-unmīlana*, 'eye-unclosing'), the chiselling of the eye image. It was preceded by a period of meditation and prayer, and followed by the rite of 'enlivening' the idol.

Similarly it is believed that on death the deceased are quite blind, and grope about eyeless in the next world. The eye is essentially the organ of the earthly body and can only be transferred to the dead by special ceremonies, one of which is the *diakshu-dana*, 'eye-bestowal', performed by a certain class of professional painters.

The deliberate beholding *(darśana)* of an auspicious person or thing brings blessing, since the sight of the beneficent object infuses the beholder with its own virtue. Hence the visit of devotees to their spiritual leaders, of subjects to their rulers, of pilgrims to shrines, to obtain a darśan or viewing.

Benjamin Walker *Hindu World*



Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University

Valley of Dry Bones, a drawing by William Blake; Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones coming to life is a symbol of Israel's future regeneration

EZEKIEL

LAST OF THE THREE major prophets, Ezekiel was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. He was a priest by birth and his preaching combines prophetic and priestly elements. Scholarly opinion is divided regarding the biography of the prophet and the authorship of the book ascribed to him. Some hold that he was of Palestinian origin, receiving his call to be a prophet in 592 BC, beginning his ministry in Jerusalem and leaving the city shortly before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps he was deported to Babylon together with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC. Others again hold that his whole ministry was exercised in Babylonia and that the entire book was written there. It is not certain, however, that the whole book is by one hand, and some scholars argue for dual authorship and later editorial revision.

The book clearly divides into two main parts: chapters 1-24, predicting the imminent fall and destruction of Jerusalem, and chapters 25-48 prophesying ultimate reconciliation with God, the return of the exiles, and the restoration of Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple. This second half of the book subdivides into three sections: chapters 25-32, containing prophecies against several foreign nations (Aram, Moab, Edom and others); chapters 33-39, prophesying the redemption and restoration of the Jewish people; and chapters 40-48 describing in great detail Ezekiel's vision of the reconstructed Temple and the ideal rule of God to be established in the future. It is in the attention to cultic details and in his emphasis on holiness and on the majestic splendour of the future Temple that the 'priestly' element in Ezekiel's prophecy is particularly noticeable.

There is an extremely strong visionary element in Ezekiel's prophecy, and his prophetic activity was often accompanied by symbolic behaviour of an almost compulsive nature. He exhibits to an even greater extent than other biblical prophets the overpowering effect of the divine call on both the

Ezekiel's Vision

'In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month...the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God...As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures... In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire... and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning... Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them... their appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite; and the four had the same likeness, their construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel... Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, shining like crystal...And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters... And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form.' (Ezekiel 1.1-26).

Early Jewish mystics cultivated an ecstatic kind of mysticism which taught its initiates ways of achieving the visionary experience of the divine glory and splendour of light: the throne of God. In the literature of these mystics, the throne (Hebrew *kisse*) is more often called 'chariot' (Hebrew *merkabah*), probably under the influence of Ezekiel's great vision, and in rabbinic circles only chosen disciples were permitted to engage in the mystical disciplines known as *ma'aseh merkabah*. To overcome the 'perils of the soul' which the adept encountered during his ascent through the celestial spheres to stand before the throne, he had to use incantations, spells and conjurations.

In recent years, some 'ufologists' have claimed that Ezekiel's vision was a real event rather than a spiritual experience, and that it was an encounter with an extra-terrestrial vehicle and its occupants. (See CABALA; UFO.)

prophet's mind and his body. Some psychiatrists have thought to detect schizoid tendencies in Ezekiel: his teaching shows an extraordinary combination of universalism on the one hand and consciousness of the unique election of Israel on the other, as well as the tension between the corporate and individual responsibility. While he is mainly concerned with the collective defection of Israel and profoundly aware of the corporate character of the religious community, he also emphasizes individual responsibility (18. 2-31). He insists that 'the son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son' – evidently in dispute of current misconceptions on the subject of collective guilt, which were probably part of a more general mood of despondency and despair that had seized the Jewish exiles in Babylonia. While unremitting in his harsh denunciations of all forms of idolatry and iniquity, Ezekiel's message was one of hope, expressed most powerfully in his vision of the dry bones being clothed with flesh and skin and coming to life again (chapter 37) – a symbol of Israel's future regeneration.

The overwhelming splendour of the divine majesty and its throne of glory is described in the opening vision of the book (chapter 1) . This vision formed the basis of later Jewish mysticism, the Merkabah, and also influenced subsequent angelology and apocalyptic writing.

The anthropomorphic elements in Ezekiel's vision of the throne of glory, as well as certain contradictions between his description of the future ritual in the Temple and the Law of Moses – that is between Ezekiel's priestly law and that contained in Leviticus – gave the book a questionable character. The ancient rabbis forbade the reading and study of chapter 1 in public, and some rabbis in the 2nd century even opposed the canonization of the book. Its authority was already too firmly established, however, and it remained part of Old Testament scripture.

FACELESS GODDESSES

FIGURINES OF WOMEN, characterized by emphasis upon the sexual or maternal features of the body and the complete absence of any facial features, have been discovered on many Paleolithic sites extending over a wide area from France and Italy to South Russia and Siberia. They are known technically as 'Venus-figures'. Sometimes the head is merely a knob; on the so-called 'Venus of Willendorf', in Austria, the whole head appears to be covered with horizontal layers of thick curls. Most notable among these Venus-figures is the 'Venus of Laussel', in the Dordogne, France, which is sculptured in relief on a slab. This figure has been interpreted as a Paleolithic prototype of the mother goddess so widely worshipped later in the ancient world.

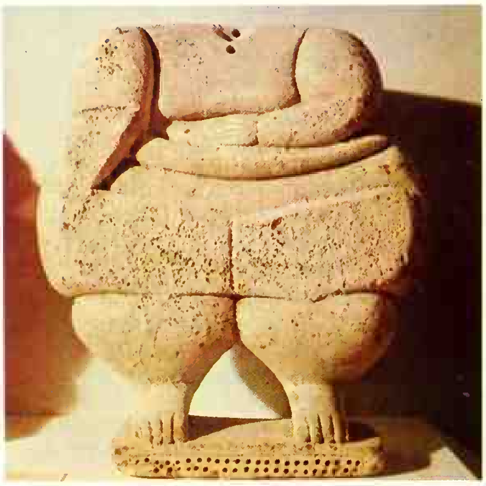
Among the many problems connected with these Venus-figures is the absence of facial features. That this characteristic was deliberately intended by their makers, and not due to artistic ability, is certain from the fact that the bodily features are skilfully represented. The reason for this strange differentiation in treatment of face and body can only be guessed at; the most likely explanations would seem to be that either there was some reluctance, probably due to magical considerations, to depict the face, or attention was concentrated upon the sexual or maternal significance of the female as the source of new life.

Many millennia after the making of these faceless Paleolithic figurines, statues were made of a faceless goddess in the Greek city of Cyrene, in Libya. One of the most striking examples has the form of the upper portion of a female body, in classical costume, holding in the left hand an alabastron or small vase. But, instead of a woman's neck and face, a cylindrical column rises from the shoulders, on top of which, at the appropriate level, the waved hair of a woman is sculptured; this, in turn, is surmounted by a *kalathos* or *modius*, a symbol of fertility worn by the Graeco-Egyptian underworld god Serapis, and also by Hecate and Cybele, goddesses who had similar connections. The statue originally stood on a sarcophagus, from which it must have appeared to be emerging.

No inscriptions reveal the identity of the figure or its curious mounting upon tombs. There is, however, good reason for believing that it represents Persephone, the goddess of the underworld. This is strengthened by the existence of temples of Persephone and Hades or Pluto at Cyrene. If the identification be sound, then the half-length statues and their mounting could be well explained in terms of the myth of Persephone.

According to this myth, Persephone, the daughter of the corn goddess Demeter, was carried off by Pluto to Hades, his subterranean realm. The sorrowing mother sought for her lost daughter, neglecting her duties as the corn goddess. Zeus finally had to intervene; he arranged that Persephone should spend part of the year above the ground with Demeter and the remainder with Pluto in Hades (see DEMETER).

Venus-figure from Malta, thought to represent a fertility or mother goddess



C. M. Dixon. National Museum of Valletta

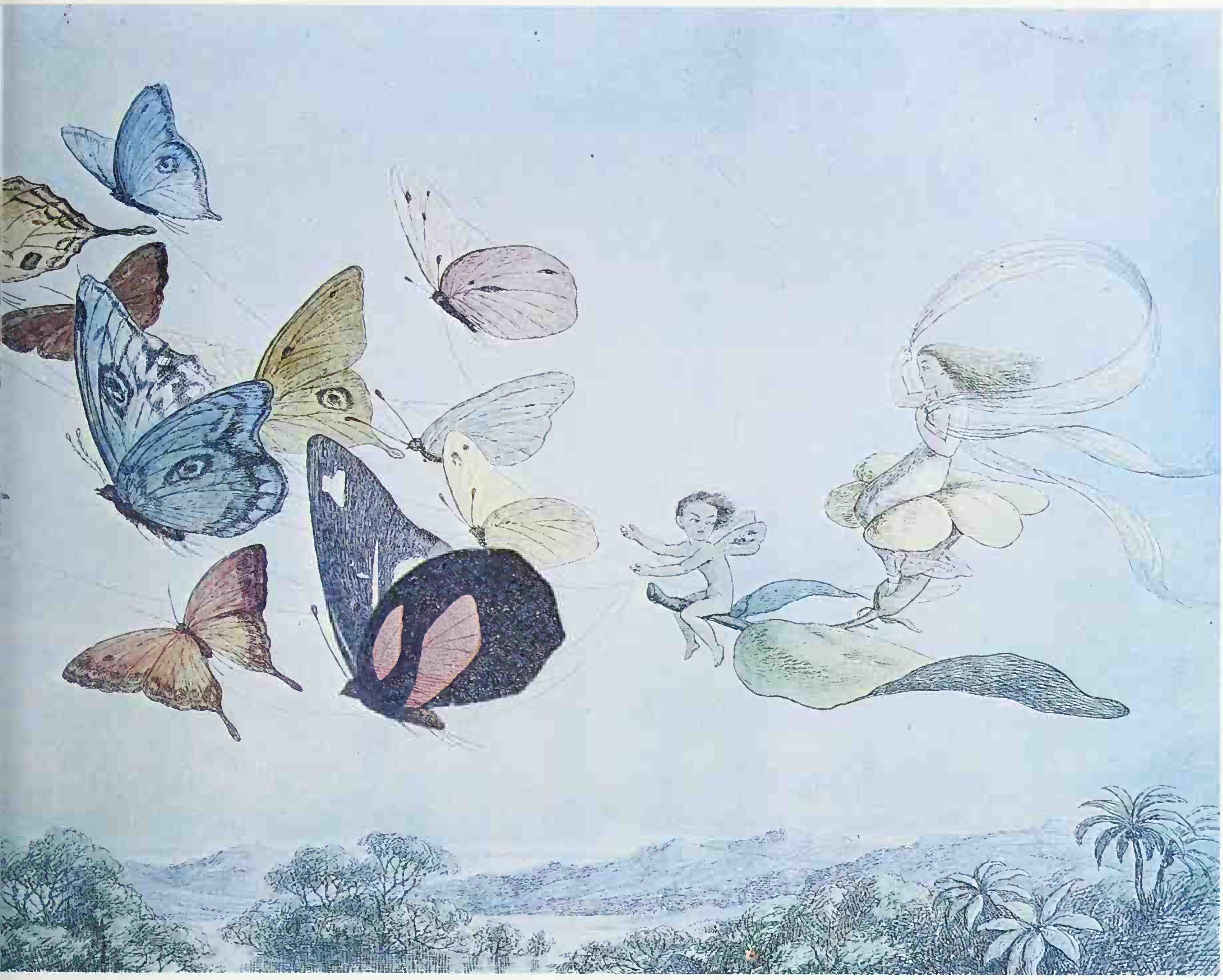
The annual ascent (*anodos*) of Persephone from the realm of the dead symbolized the resurrection of vegetation in spring, and gave hope for life after death. The Cyrene statues thus probably represent the *anodos* of Persephone as signifying the assurance of resurrection to a new life for the dead.

This explanation, however, still leaves unaccounted for the faceless image of the goddess. A clue to the answer here is probably given by the cylindrical column that replaces the face and neck of the statue: it looks almost as though the body and hair have been attached to a stone column or pillar. Since there is evidence of a native Libyan cult of stone pillars connected with a fertility goddess, it would seem likely that with the establishment of Greek culture in Cyrene this native Libyan goddess, with her underworld attributes, was identified with the Greek Persephone.

The idea of an 'unknown god' finds its classic expression in the speech which the Apostle Paul is recorded to have made on the Areopagus hill at Athens (Acts, 17.22-31). Paul, having been invited by certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers to explain his new religion, opened his discourse by remarking: 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, "To an Unknown God". What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.' Paul then proceeded to introduce Christianity to his Athenian audience.

Paul's reference to this altar and its inscription has long aroused curiosity and much learned discussion. There is no other evidence that there existed at Athens such dedication to 'an unknown god' (*agnosto theo*): but there are references by ancient Greek writers to altars to 'unknown gods'.

Who these deities were is a matter for speculation; but it seems likely that in Greece the reference was to foreign gods whom it was thought wise to propitiate – or such dedications could represent a kind of comprehensive religious insurance policy, on the principle that it was dangerous to neglect any deity.



John Webb

FAIRIES

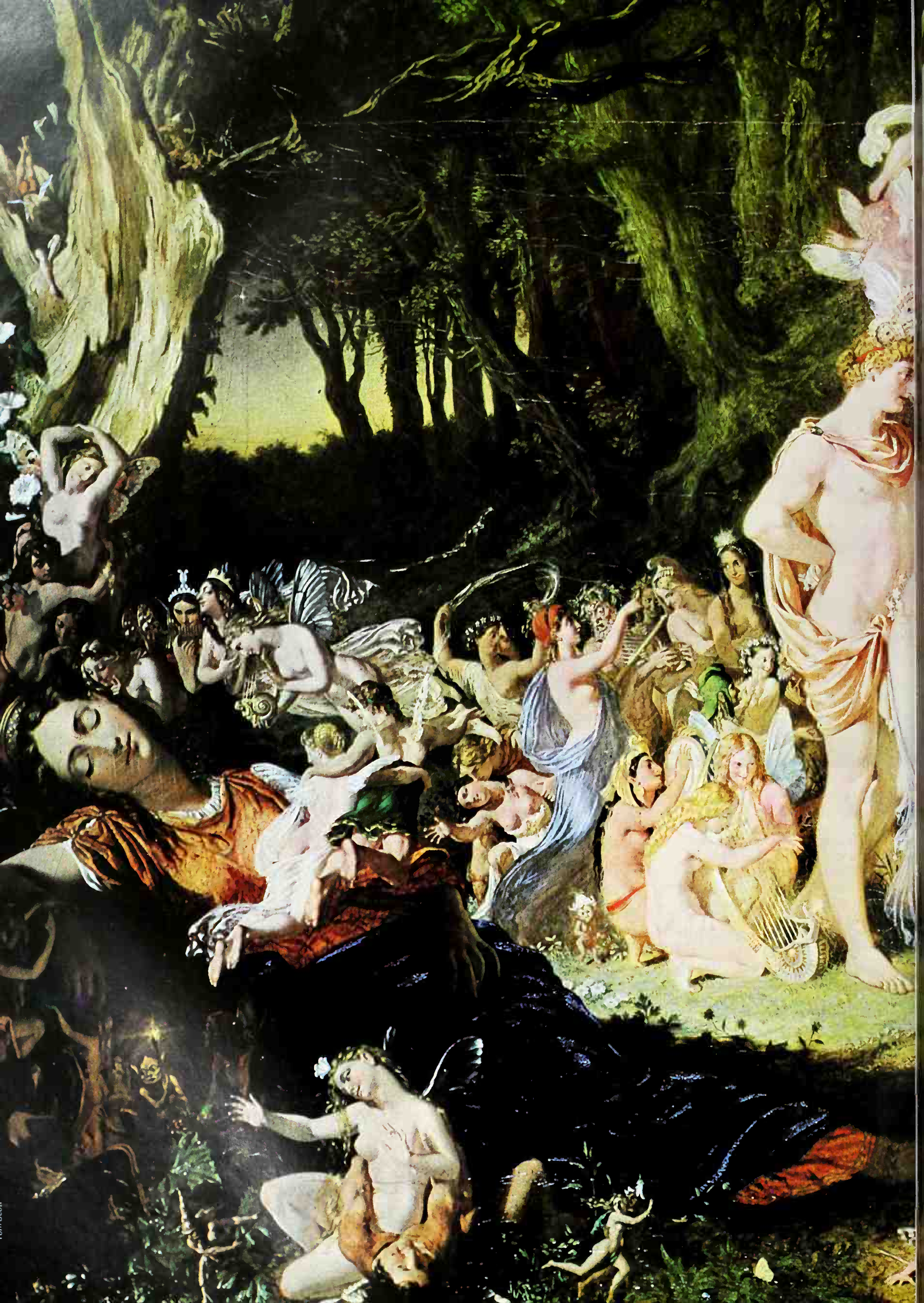
hey are tricksy and unpredictable at best and t the worst, baleful and terrifying. Fairies f many shapes and sizes are believed to have xisted alongside man since ancient times; ometimes to his benefit but often to his cost

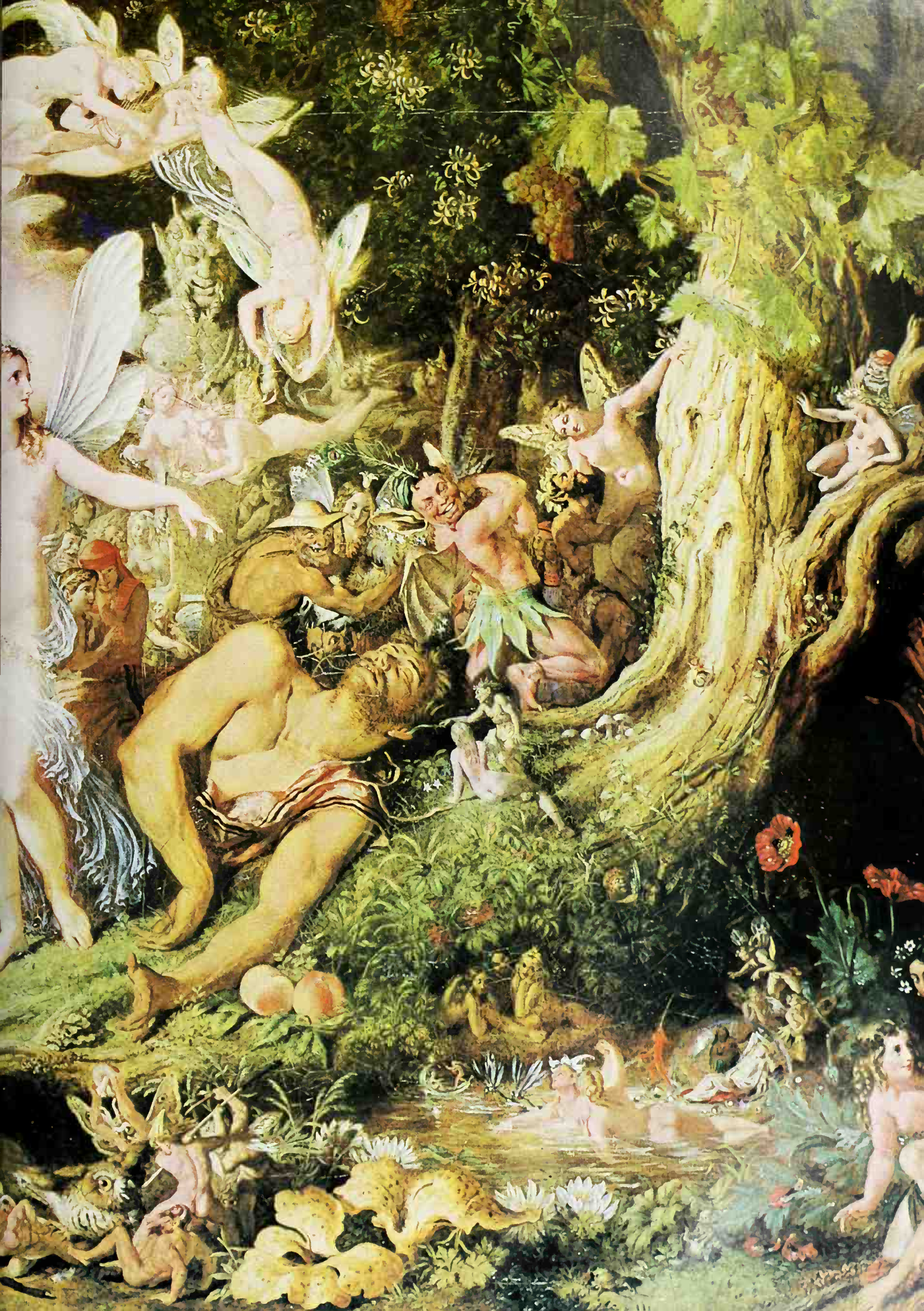
BELIEF IN FAIRIES has been explored by many people, and frequently explained, but emains one of the most mysterious and ewildering subjects that the folklorist can nvestigate. One reason for the mystery is he widely held belief among believers that t is unlucky to speak of fairies. Besides his, the fairies themselves are so various and the theories about their origin so diverse that it is often difficult to paint a onsistent picture of them.

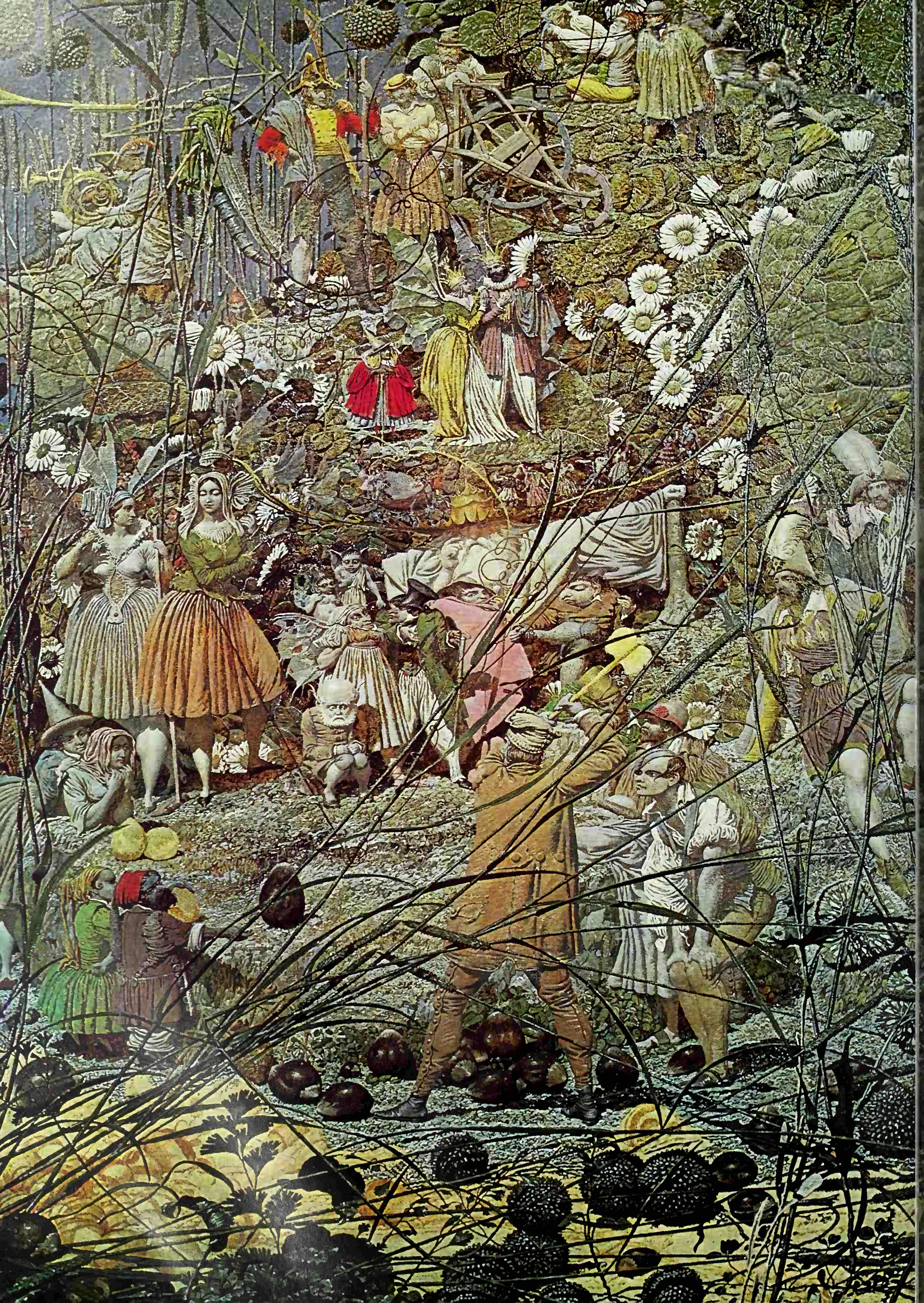
The word itself is perhaps a very unfortunate one. The original word was 'fay', now so archaic as to seem hopelessly affected. It is believed to derive from the Latin 'fata', the individual fates of men, who were personified as supernatural women visiting the cradles of newly-born children. The word was used both as a noun and as an adjective, for 'fay' meant enchanted or bewitched, and 'fay-erie' (faerie) was used for both a state of enchantment and for an enchanted realm. The state became confused with the person, and 'fays' became 'fairies'. Even so, the believers in fairies did not think it wise to use the name, and the more complimentary the term could be made the better the fairies would be pleased. The principle was the same as that by which the Greeks called the Furies 'the Kindly Ones.'

The fairies of English tradition were thought to have their own realm with king and queen and royal courts: 'The Fairy Queen Takes an Airy Drive', from a series of water colours by Richard Doyle

Anyone who wants to study the characteristics of fairies all over the world cannot begin better than by reading a little book, which, though a century old is still extremely valuable, *The Fairy Mythology* by Thomas Keightley. The subject is a wide one; this article is confined to the fairies of the British Isles, including not only those of the Arthurian legends and medieval romances, and many other types of fairies, but also pixies, hobs, goblins, gnomes, mermaids, hags, bogeys and elementals.







Most fairies have powers of a kind, and can at least bring good or ill luck, strike mortals with paralysis, slay cattle and feed on the goodness of grain and milk

Fairies vary in powers, size, character, ppearance, habits and the origins ascribed o them. When it comes to the question of rigins, there are two different lines to ollow. In the first place there are the pinions of those who have actually believed n fairies, either in the past or the present – nd these are by no means unanimous – nd in the second there are those of the tudents of folklore, who have advanced a umber of different theories.

Aristocrats and Commoners

airies are said to range from the great nd potent ones of more than mortal size to he very small creatures who are occasionlly captured, and either make their escape r pine and die in captivity. Most fairies ave powers of a kind, and can at least ring good or ill luck, strike mortals with aralysis, slay cattle and feed on the goodess of grain and milk. Some of them can o good or ill, some are wholly wicked; even he best of them need to be treated with espect. Many a helpful brownie has urned into a malicious boggart because ome fool has played a practical joke on him.

There are first the heroic or romance airies of the Arthurian legends and medieval omances. The great example of these is the Dana o'Shee of Ireland. They are the ristocracy of fairyland, who ride and ight and hunt, and live in a beautiful land exempt from death or change, the Land of he Ever Young. These heroic fairies are ssociated with many tales of the Fairy Ride or Rade) in which a procession of these ordly creatures would be seen riding in a gallant troop, headed by their king and queen. In the English tradition these fairies are generally held to be a smaller race, sometimes tiny. They have their own realm with its royal courts, they enjoy music and dancing, and wear jewelled, glittering clothes; in some parts of England they are so tiny that the whole royal dais can be caught under a man's hat.

The common people of fairyland live either in small family groups or as solitaries and some of them live in villages under the fairy knolls. There are many little fairies who ask for help in mending tiny shovels or three-legged stools, and who pay their helpers with small gifts of food, and with good luck. An example of the solitary fairy is the leprechaun, the fairy shoemaker, whose hoards of gold are much coveted by mortals. These fairies are generally small, though varying from the size of a three-year-old child to a height of a few inches.

Forgotten Gods and Guardians

In a different category are the nature fairies and forgotten gods, spirits of streams, springs and lakes, and mermaids; spirits of individual trees or of woods, guardians of animals and plants and growing crops. These are rarer in Britain than in some other countries, but examples can be found even in English tradition, though they are more common in the Celtic parts of Britain.

Akin to these, though not identical with them, are the tutelary fairies, often guardians of one particular family, like that who gave the fairy flag to the MacLeods of Skye, or the one who watches over the Grants. Others are homely domestic spirits, brownies, lobs, cellar ghosts, down to Awd Goggie who guards the gooseberry bushes. The most tragic of these tutelary fairies are the Irish or Highland banshees, each attached to a family or clan. Banshee means 'fairy woman', but the general type has come to be applied to a special type of spirit possibly an ancestral ghost, who is to be heard weeping before the death of any member of her special family. Lady Wilde, in her *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1887), gives a vivid and poetic description of the banshee. In the Highlands of Scotland she is often called 'The Washer by the Ford' because she is generally seen washing the bloodstained garments of those about to die.

Brownies and other hobs are attached either to families or to places, but if they are offended they will move to another farm. Sometimes they follow the families to which they are attached. They have even been known to emigrate to Canada.

The fifth group consists of the bogey beasts and goblins. These are often closely linked to the homelier of the tutelary fairies. A boggart can be a brownie gone to the bad. John Rhys in *Celtic Folklore* has a rather touching story of a brownie who was driven from one farm to another, always leaving when practical jokes were played on him, until he came to a farm where there was a manservant called Moses, with whom he struck up a great friendship. He was perfectly happy and very useful until Moses went to fight for Henry VII, and was killed at Bosworth Field. Then the poor brownie went completely to the bad, and became so troublesome that he was at length caught by an awl thrust through his long, sharp nose, and kept pinned to the spot while an exorcism was read over him. Then the awl was drawn out, and a magical wind bore him away to the Red Sea.

Most of the boggarts are mischievous rather than dangerous, and Will o' the Wisps and various forms of bogey beasts are much the same. They delight in misleading travellers and playing practical jokes. A typical story is told of the bogey beasts known as the Hedley Kow. He took the form of a pot of gold, and was dragged along by a delighted old woman; then he changed in quick succession into a bar of silver, a piece of iron and a big round stone; then finally he shot up over four long legs, and leapt away like a lean colt, swishing his long tail in delight. But the old woman had the best of it after all, for she was equally delighted by every change for the worse, and finally uplifted with joy at having met the bogey beast in person, and made so bold with him.

The Hedley Kow is harmless enough, though mischievous, but some of the creatures of this class were dreaded as really evil and dangerous. The Border Redcaps are an example. They inhabited tower houses along the Border where violent deeds had been done, and their red caps were dyed in the blood of the travellers they had murdered. The Highland glaistigs appeared like beautiful women, but they were vampires who sucked the blood of any human partners who would dance with them. Shellycoat, a Scottish water spirit, dressed in seaweed hung with clattering shells, sometimes played Will o' the Wisp tricks

Previous page **Oberon and Titania, the King and Queen of the Fairies in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are reconciled after a quarrel over a little Indian boy changeling. At the same time Oberon reunites two mortal lovers who had fallen out, by instilling a magic love potion into their eyes while they are asleep. Painting by Joseph Noel Paton in the National Gallery of Scotland**

Left **'A Fairy Tree-Feller' by Richard Dadd, in the Tate Gallery; tree-felling was one of the many ways in which fairies were thought to assist mortals**

on travellers, but had been known to toss a benighted man up and down like a ball until he killed him. Water kelpies, like bogey beasts, often took the form of a horse, but their desire was always to carry their victims into the water and devour them.

The last group of fairy creatures consists of hags, giants and monsters. Giants are always creatures of the past; the evidence for them is the great works that they have left behind, but even the most credulous believer never expected to see a giant. The same is true of dragons, though not of all monsters. The supernatural hags, *Cailleach Beurh* (the blue hag) or Cally Berry, as she is called in Ulster, Black Annis of the Midlands and a few more of the same kind are not believed in now, but were once thought to be alive and dangerous.

Fairy Ethics

The fairies have a morality of their own that does not correspond in all ways with respectable humanity. They are great lovers of cleanliness and order, and expect this to be respected by the humans whom they visit. As a rule they have few scruples about taking any mortal goods, milk, meal or cattle, but they punish severely any mortal who steals from them. They hate miserliness above all things, and love an open, cheerful character. Perhaps because of their interest in fertility, they are rather free and wanton in their own conduct, and are friendly towards lovers. Politeness is very important in all dealings with them, though there are some that must not be thanked. They are passionate lovers of privacy, and punish spies and eavesdroppers. At the same time they are grateful for hospitality and kindness, and often repay it disproportionately.

Of all the fairy pilfering habits the most distressing to mortals is that of stealing babies out of their cradles and leaving changelings in their place. This belief has probably caused more cruelty and unhappiness than any other piece of fairylore, for the usual way of getting rid of a changeling is to ill-treat it, though very occasionally the mother is told to take special care of it, so as to win the gratitude of the fairy mother. (See CHANGELING.)

Children are not the only mortals stolen by the fairies. Nursing mothers were believed to be in special danger until they were churched, and they were coveted by the fairies to serve as foster mothers for the fairy babies who did not thrive. Young men with special skills were sometimes decoyed away, and young girls, particularly those with golden hair, were carried off as brides.

The Fairy Midwife story, one of the commonest and most widespread, may have some connection with this. In the usual version of the story the midwife is called out at night by an odd-looking old fellow, and taken to a cottage where a young woman is in labour. She duly delivers the child, and is given a box of ointment with which to anoint its eyes. Accidentally or on purpose she touches one of her own eyes with the ointment, and at once the whole scene is changed. The cottage becomes a cave, the young woman a lady of great beauty, the children round the bed are seen as hairy imps, and the old father is even uglier than before. The midwife manages to keep her surprise to herself and gets away safely, but some time later she sees the old man pilfering in the market, and accosts him. He asks which eye she sees him with, and when she points to it, immediately blinds it.

Another common fairy habit is to visit houses at night, to bathe their babies in the water left for them. The room must be left tidy, the hearth swept, the fire made up and fresh water left in a pail by the fireside. The maid who attends to this will find sixpence in her shoe, which will be left after every visit as long as she keeps it secret, for fairy gifts must not be talked of. A lazy maid who neglects her duty is punished with cramps or lameness.

Fairy methods of flight and levitation are very like those practised by witches. A ragwort stem or twig is used by a small fairy instead of a witch's broomstick. Some form of incantation is used; the antiquary John Aubrey (1626-1697) gives the operative, words as 'Horse and Hattock!' Sometimes the power of flight is given by a blue cap.

Rays of Coloured Light

The fairies vary even more in their appearance than they do in their other characteristics. The astral fairies seen by some of the modern Irish seers are described as about 7 or 8 feet in height, radiant and beautiful, with rays of coloured light streaming from them. On the other hand some fairies of the Isle of Man described by Walter Gill in *A Third Manx Scrapbook*, as seen by a friend at the beginning of this century, were little men about 18 inches high, greyish in colour, like a fungus, their bodies rather swollen in front. Their eyes and heads were clearly distinguishable, and their heads moved as they danced. The Welsh *Tylwyth Teg* are small but beautiful; they generally wear white, though some Welsh fairies wear striped, many-coloured clothes. Green is the most usual colour for fairies to wear, both in England and Scotland. Geoffrey Hodson, a clairvoyant who claimed to be able to see fairies, described in his book *Fairies at Work and at Play* a group of fairies about six inches high with oval fluttering wings, dancing in a ring and wearing floating draperies of pale blue. This is an unusual colour for fairies. A fairy whose appearance in Perthshire is recorded in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies is described as 'a wee green man with peakit boots, with a cap like an old gramophone horn on his head.' His face was dark and furrowed.

The kings and knights of the Trooping Fairies are generally as beautiful as their ladies, but the men in the second grade of fairies are often wizened, hairy and stunted, though their women are beautiful. Pixies have turned-up noses, red hair and squint eyes. They generally wear green, but are occasionally naked. The tiny flower fairies are exquisite and dainty. There are any number of hideous fairy creatures, like the spriggans of Cornwall, who can be large or small at will, but are grotesque at any size. Brownies are grotesque, hairy and ragged, and were supposed to have no noses, only nostrils, while the boggarts had long sharp noses.

Beauty and Shapeless Horror

The fairies of the British Isles have many characteristics in common, yet there is a different flavour about them in every region. The gentlest are the fairies of central England. They are often small in size and though tricksy are not often dangerous. Their insistence on order and cleanliness, their habit of visiting houses, their influence over crops, all suggest that they were once agricultural spirits.

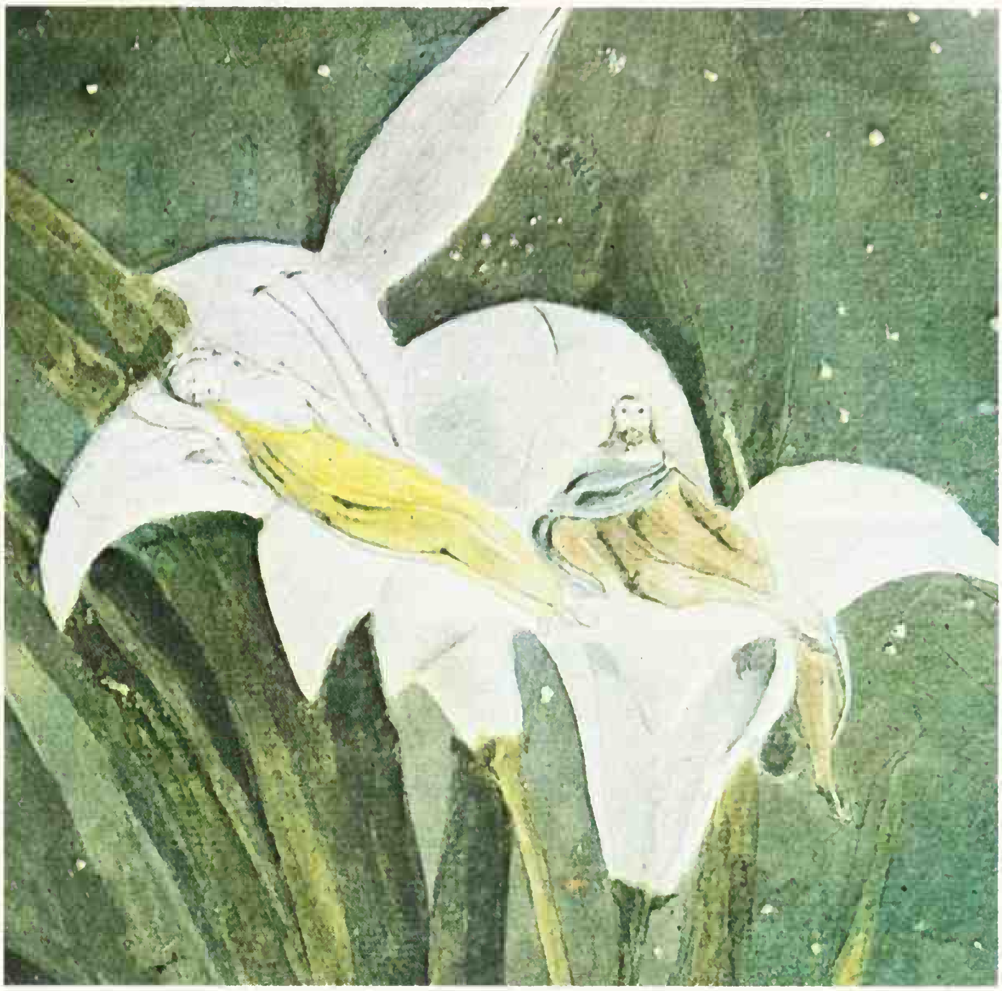
In the Fen Country, along the east coast of England, the traditions are grimmer. The Yarthkins of the Lincolnshire Fens were small, ugly, malicious creatures, always ready to do evil. They have gone with the draining of the Fens, and no one can regret them. Northward the picture becomes darker. Though there are still tales of little merry fairies, there are also many boggarts and many bogey beasts, and on the Border we have the murderous Redcaps. In the Lowlands of Scotland there are traditions of the Fairy Rade and the fairies of the Border ballads, but on the whole the creatures are more prosaic than in Ireland. In the Highlands the Celtic imagination has again full play, but the duality of the fairy nature is strongly stressed; there are good and bad among them. Beautiful music is heard from the fairy hills, but there are traditions of monstrous creatures, blood-suckers and water kelpies and shapeless horrors.

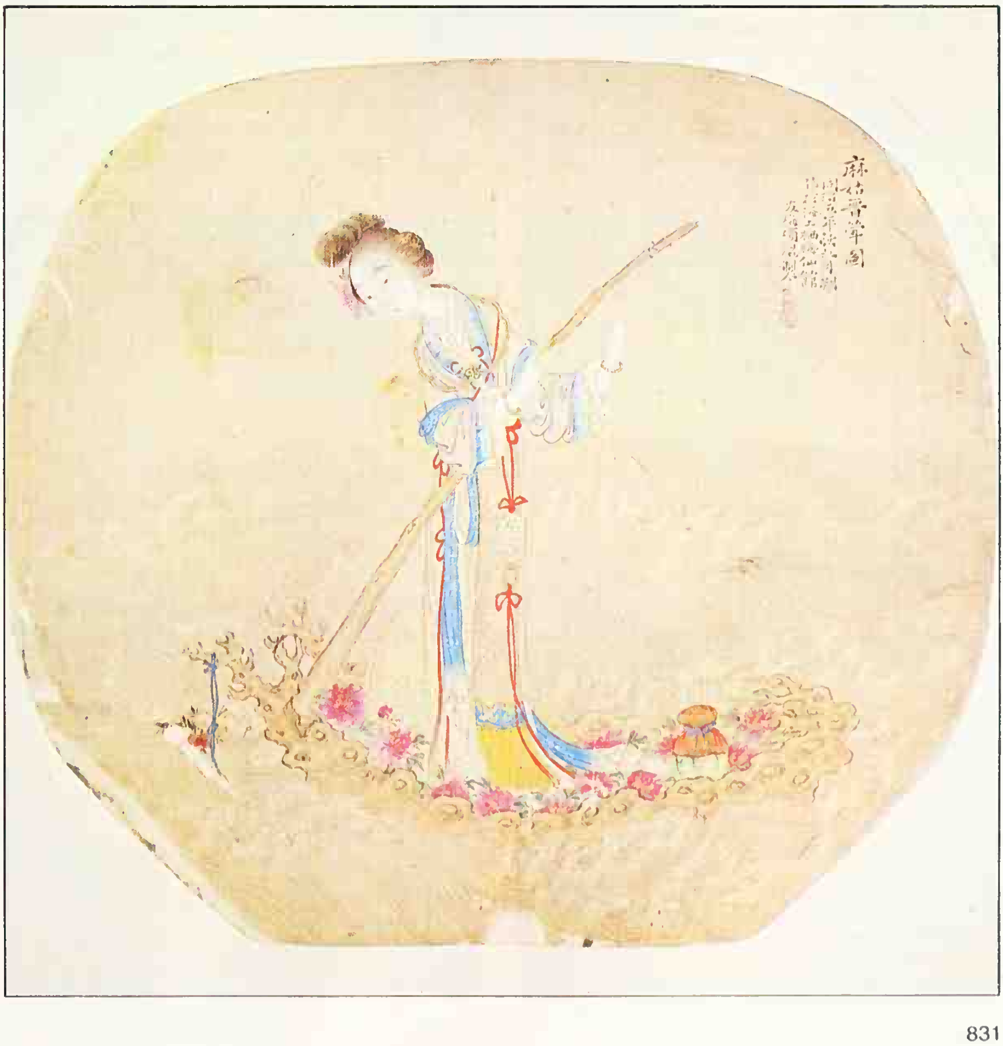
The fairies assume their most beautiful form in Ireland. We hear much of their music, and of the beauty of their women and the stateliness of their men. There are also grotesque, comical fairies, and even the most beautiful of the Irish fairies are dangerous; a man goes with them at his peril, and many of them that appear beautiful are the evil host of the dead.

The early heroic legends of Ireland and the Highlands have been so well preserved in oral tradition that the fairy beliefs have retained a remarkable continuity; they have been more varied and fluctuating in England with its great admixture of races. In all countries the fairy beliefs are ancient, and probably stem back to primitive gods and religions. As has already been said, *fata* is the accepted derivation of the word 'fay', and the sophisticated fairies who were guests at Sleeping Beauty's christening are remote descendants of the Fates who appeared at Meleager's cradle and of the Norns, who were the female fates of Nordic mythology. In Greece, Italy and other Romance countries, the nymphs and *genii loci* – spirits of the place – became fairies. In Ireland the Dana o'Shee are generally accepted as the personifications of the lost gods of the land.

In England the earliest mention of the fairies is the Anglo-Saxon charms against elf-shot, which was the infliction of disease by elf arrows; it is possible even that in the 9th century Utrecht Psalter we have the first picture of fairies with wings, in what appears to be the representation of an elf-shot man. After the Norman Conquest less

Right Flower fairies were considered to be the most exquisite and dainty: according to one belief, fairies were the souls of the dead who had died before their appointed time _Below_ right The Chinese fairy Ma-Kuh lived in the 2nd century AD. She was a beneficent sorceress who reclaimed a large area of land from the sea and converted it into a mulberry orchard





Michael Holford

is heard of the elves, but the 12th and 13th century chroniclers have a variety of fairy anecdotes to record. Walter Map (born c1140) wrote a fascinating book called *De Nugis Curialium* (Courtiers' Trifles). He told an early version of the Fairy Wife tale. It comes from the Welsh Border, and is the legend of a historical character, Wild Edric, who for some time resisted the Norman Conquest; he fell in love with a fairy and snatched her away from a fairy dance in a house in the Forest of Clun. She consented to be his wife on condition that he never reproached her with her origin. They were happily married for many years and when Edric had made submission to king William he took her to Court, where her beauty was much admired. At last, however, in an impatient moment, he asked if she had been with her sisters, and at once she vanished. The fairy house in the forest was not to be found, and he sought her in vain until he died. He was long said to ride, with his lady beside him and his train following, over the Welsh Border country. The last recorded appearance was in the 19th century when they were seen by a girl and her father; the girl, though illiterate, correctly described their Saxon costume with the cross-gartered leggings.

An earlier ride described by Walter Map is that of Herla, who ruled over ancient Britain. One day, king Herla was visited by the King of the Fairies, a small grotesque creature riding upon a goat. He said that he was the lord of many realms and he offered to attend Herla's wedding, bringing some of his people with him, if Herla would return the compliment a year later, and honour his wedding with his presence. King Herla promised to do this though he had no wedding in mind at that time. It happened that a match was soon arranged, however, and on the wedding day the Fairy King arrived, attended by many servants, as grotesque as himself, but all with courtly manners and loaded with gifts, food and drink and many costly presents. They undertook the service of the banquet, and by their alacrity and good cheer they won the favour of the guests. At cockcrow they departed, the Fairy King reminding Herla of his promise.

Accordingly, in a year's time king Herla set out, accompanied by his knights and carrying many rich gifts with him. He was royally received, and three days and nights were passed in feasting and merriment. Then Herla wished to return to his young wife and his people. The Fairy King gave him many gifts, and last of all a little greyhound to sit on the king's saddle before him, and he charged them all not to dismount until the dog leapt down.

The king and his knights rode towards home, but everything was changed, and he could not find his palace. He asked the way of a peasant passing by, but he could hardly make himself understood, nor understand what the man said, for 300 years had passed since he entered fairyland, and in the meantime the Saxons had conquered Britain. When they understood this, some of Herla's knights leapt to the ground, and at once the weight of their years came upon them, and they crumbled into dust. Then Herla remembered the warning of the Fairy King and he called to his knights to ride through the centuries, waiting for the dog to leap down; it is said that he will never do this until the Day of Judgement.

Dining on Roast Frog

Another source of fairy legends is Gervase of Tilbury, author of *Otia Imperialia*, who flourished about 1210. His stories come from several parts of Europe, but he tells of the earliest tiny fairies, called Portunes in England and Neptunes in France. They were only a few inches high, with faces like wrinkled old men, and came into human houses at night, where they roasted frogs in front of the fires left burning for them. Gervase gives us the first Fairy Midwife story, complete with the fairy ointment and the blinding of the seeing eye.

The fairy references of the early chroniclers are not frequent, but they cover a surprising number of fairy types and legends. There is not such a variety in the medieval romances. Except for giants, dwarfs and unexplained enchantments, we chiefly hear of the fairy women, with their power of enchantment. Some of these are treated as fairies, some as mortals with magical powers. In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (see ARTHUR), Morgan le Fay is a mortal, but she derives from a fairy, Fata Morgana. On the other hand Nimue, the Lady of the Lake, seems to be thought of as a fairy, though the French author of *Lancelot du Lac* gives a determinedly matter-of-fact account of her: 'Now the story saith that the Damosel that carried Lancelot into the lake was a fay. In those days all maidens that knew enchantments and charms were called fays, and there were many of them at this time, and more in Great Britain than in other lands'.

With Chaucer begins the refrain of the passing of the fairies, which has been echoed ever since. Two centuries after Chaucer's reference to the disappearance of the elves, this thought is echoed in the words of another poet:

> But now alas they all are dead
> Or gone beyond the seas.

In the 19th century Hugh Miller tells the same tale, 'The People of Peace shall never more be seen in Scotland'. Yet in spite of this, rumours of fairies continued to run through the land, and even today there are still people who claim to see them.

Fallen Angels or Ghosts?

What is the explanation of this strange and yet recurrent body of belief? Various explanations have been given, and no single one seems to cover the whole ground. Medieval churchmen accepted St Augustine's suggestion that the supernatural beings of the heathen were not senseless idols but fallen angels trying to usurp the place of God. The more uncompromising Puritans held that the fairies were outright devils, but a more charitable belief, still held in Ireland, is that the fairies were indeed fallen angels, ejected from heaven with the rest but not wicked enough for the depths of hell. As they were falling, the Son held up his hand, and they stopped short in flight; the most wicked, the *Lucifugi*, fell into the caverns below the earth, and became gnomes, kobolds, and other light-hating creatures. Some fell into the sea and became mermaids and water spirits, others into woods or flowery places, others near men's habitations, becoming brownies and hobs, whose duty was to work for man without reward.

Another equally common belief was that the fairies were the dead who had died before their appointed time, or those who were too good for hell and not good enough for heaven. In Cornwall they say that the fairies are the ghosts of the old Druids, though their stock is recruited from time to time by kidnapped mortals.

The 16th and 17th century magicians, who had many recipes for raising fairies and putting them to use, seem sometimes to have regarded them as elementals, creatures made out of one of the four elements only: sylphs from air, undines from water, gnomes from earth, and salamanders from fire. Modern believers often regard them as nature spirits, whose special function it is to fertilize plants and look after flowers.

The theories of the students of fairy lore, who study the subject more objectively, are equally diverse. In the 19th century, a theory was advanced by David MacRitchie that the fairies were a conquered, pre-Celtic race; the small primitive men who inhabited these islands, forced into hiding in caves and mounds, and therefore nocturnal in their habits. They knew the ancient traditions of the land, and were considered masters of its magic. They might occasionally make shy advances to their conquerors, and do odd jobs about the farms in return for food. They would be expert pickers and stealers, and make raids on the new settlers to carry off cattle or brides.

Perhaps the best case of all is made out by those who think that the fairy beliefs originated in a cult of the dead. This view is ably presented by Lewis Spence in *British Fairy Origins* (1946). There is no doubt that there are many traditional connections between the fairies and the dead. In many of the Irish stories given by Lady Wilde the fairy host is explicitly stated to be the 'host of the dead'. The fairy man who advised Bessie Dunlop, one of the Scottish witches, was alleged to be a man killed at the battle of Pinkie, in 1547, some 30 years previously. Many of the brownies and hobs are expressly described as ghosts. The Cauld Lad of Hilton is one, and in Ireland the Phooka of Kildare, though it took the form of an ass, was the ghost of an idle scullery boy, forced to work in the house, until he was considered worthy of reward. He was paid, like other brownies, by a gift of clothing. The minute size of the tiniest of the fairies can be plausible accounted for by the primitive notion of man's soul being a tiny creature, in human or insect form, which comes out of his mouth when he is asleep and whose wanderings account for human dreams.

Spirits of the Landscape

There are other factors, which, though not accounting for the whole body of fairy beliefs, seem to have had their share in building them. It may be taken as certain that a few of the fairies are descendants of the gods. Spirits of trees and woods seem to be true nature spirits and not the ghosts of people sacrificed in the groves in the time of primitive nature worship. The habit of personification is natural to man, and it would be strange if trees, streams, mountains and rocks should be left empty of personality in men's imaginations until a dead man could be found to haunt them. Animism is a primitive habit that dies hard. Certainly the foundation sacrifice beneath the hearth may become a ghost that in time grows into tutelary spirit, but to what was the sacrifice made? Besides these, psychic phenomena poltergeist activities and so on, whatever their cause, had an obvious part in building up fairy beliefs.

A further element, still to be explored is the symbolism of the unconscious, which everywhere produces metaphors inexplicably satisfying to the souls of men. Jung's penetrating exposition of this theme has yet to be fully examined by folklorists. He has already investigated fairy tales, but fairy beliefs may prove to be equally relevant. All these together form a fascinating complexity of beliefs and theories which merit further investigation.

K.M. BRIGGS

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John Webb

Elves feasting and frolicking among the fuchsias, a water colour by Richard Doyle; the elves were originally fairy people of Teutonic mythology who possessed magical powers to help or harm mankind

Thousands of people have testified that faith healing 'works' – yet its efficacy, by its very nature, is incapable of scientific proof. What cannot be disputed, however, is that faith healing is 'a great source of hope to the otherwise hopeless'

FAITH HEALING

FAITH HEALERS claim to have, usually in the absence of medical knowledge or skills, the gift of healing; treatment methods vary with the individual healer but in general are not those of orthodox medical practice. Attitudes to the 'faith' aspect (that is, belief held in the absence of, or in spite of, logical argument based on available facts) of faith healing vary so widely that it is not even possible to establish that such belief is an essential element in the process, whether for the healer or for the patient. Noel Bayon and Maurice Colinon worked experimentally as healers during recent years without the slightest faith in their powers, but both achieved considerable reputations.

The words 'illness' and 'disease' arouse widely differing subjective and objective responses. Dr A.E. Clark-Kennedy gives a working definition: 'A disease...so far as definition is possible, is that condition of man, woman or child of a certain psychosomatic constitution, and at a certain stage of his or her life, when a pathological process of body or mind is leading to alteration of structure or disturbance of function, with the result that he or she sooner or later starts to complain of symptoms, or signs are discovered on examination, most diseases being due to complicated interactions between genetic weakness, the adverse factors to which a man is exposed in his environment, and the psychosomatic machinery of his individual constitution. No two cases, therefore, are ever quite the same, although certain types of reaction are common, justifying the abstract conception of the real existence of disease, apart from the individual patients who actually suffer from them.'

Another authority, Professor Emilio Servadio, suggests that the study of healing and the study of cures is by no means the same thing, and that spontaneous recovery may be one of the reasons why no rational theory of healing exists. It is difficult to define a boundary between paranormal healing and orthodox medical practice; a doctor giving a patient a placebo (a pill or other medicine which is a 'dummy' and has no known chemical action), in the hope and expectation that the sufferer will benefit by being humoured, is a good physician – the faith healer may believe that he is doing something positive and his belief may also serve as a placebo; the patient feels better.

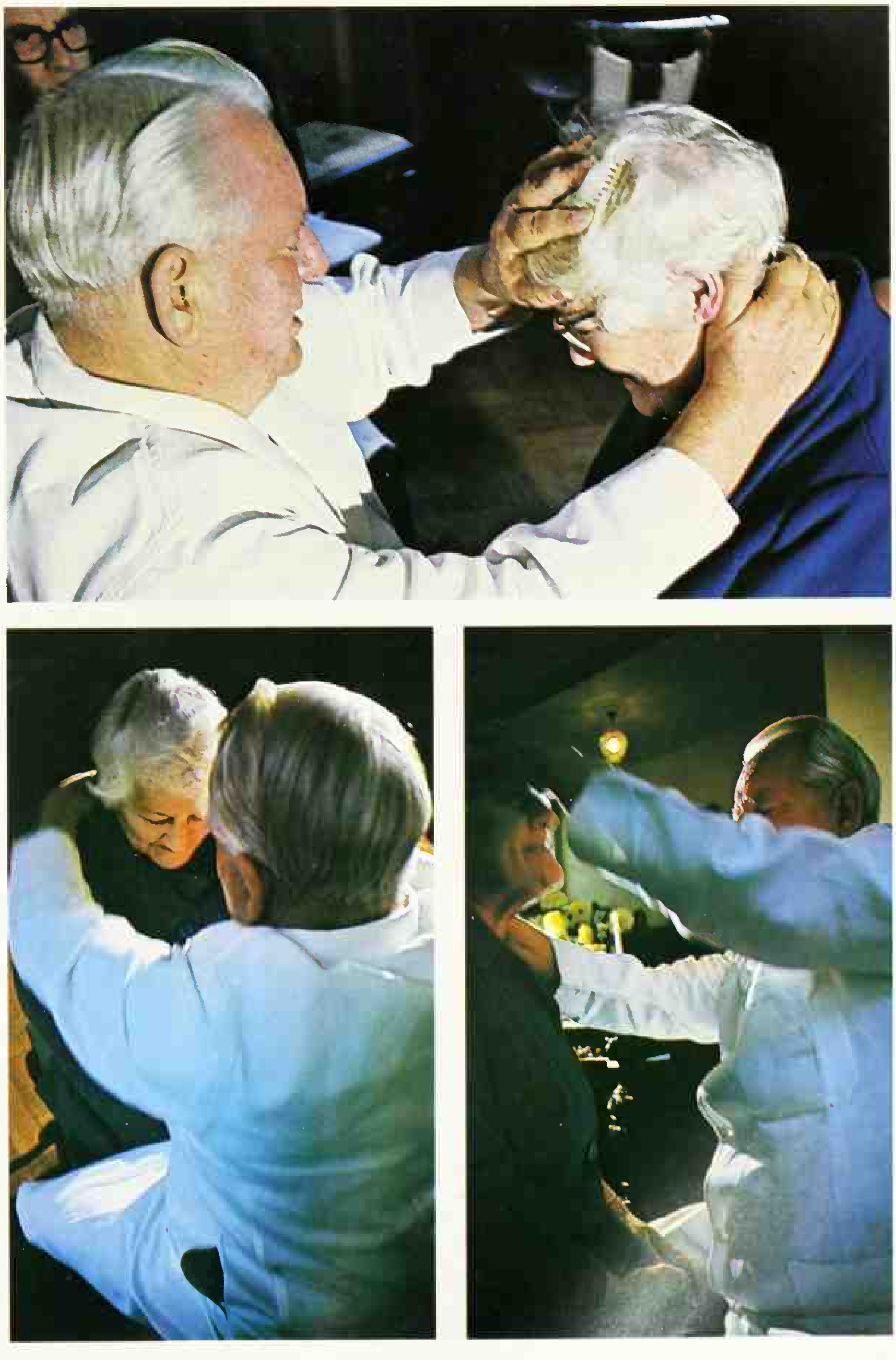
The concept of the unconscious mind elaborated by the Freud-Adler-Jung group were embellished by discoveries with the aid of hypnosis of mental processes hitherto unrecognized. The relevance of the patient-doctor relationship has received increased recognition and in this sense some of the faith healing methods are being incorporated into orthodox medical practice.

Definition of a Cure

How does one decide whether a patient is cured? Probably the majority of patients simply stop attending their doctor when they feel well. But few illnesses, major or minor, are static: there are periods when the symptoms are worse, and periods when they are less severe and these altered states may last for weeks months or even years. A further problem is that at present only organic states are roughly measurable. 'Feeling better', although of tremendous importance to most patients, is not necessarily evidence of reduction of organic disease, or complete elimination from the body of the anatomical, pathological state of illness. On the other hand, a doctor may have laboratory evidence – and a healer reasonable belief – that sufferers are cured, even though some may still continue to complain of symptoms.

Bearing these problems in mind, we can begin to consider the methods by which unorthodox healers work; these may be loosely categorized into three groups.

Firstly, there are 'magical' methods not based on observable and constant cause and effect but adopted as a result of falling



From his 'sanctuary' at Shere, in Surrey, Harry Edwards practised both direct and absent healing. He claimed a high percentage of successful cures and was visited by ailing people from all over the world. The pictures on the right show the faith healer trying to relieve patients suffering from an acutely stiff neck

Peter Goodliffe

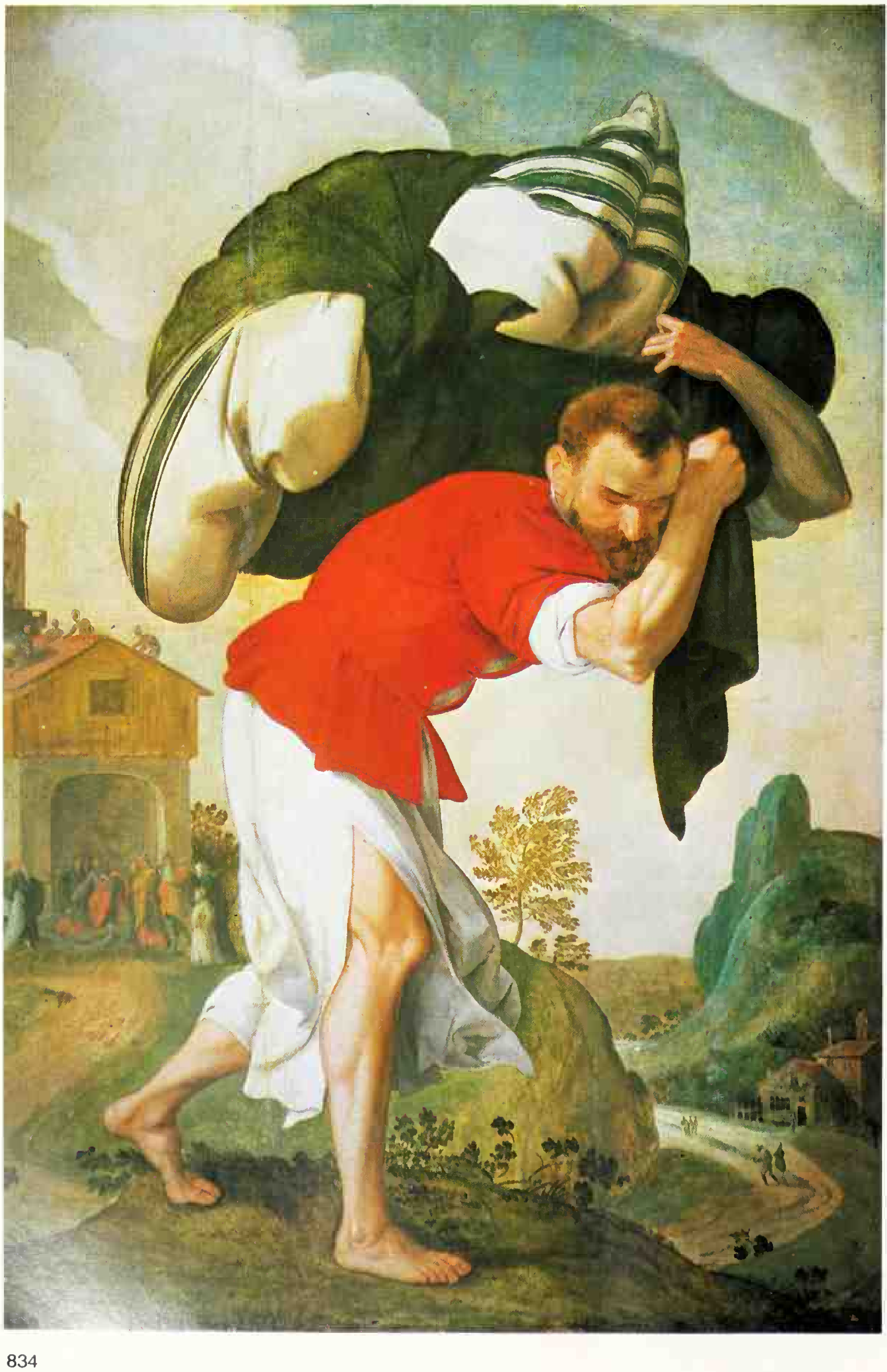
into the old trap of *post hoc propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this). These methods include practices of earlier days such as the use of charms and talismans.

The second group contains the vast array of methods involving touch, among them anointing with oil, 'stroking', the laying on of hands – and, according to Plutarch (c 46-120 AD), the unique method of laying on of toes by Pyrrhus, king of the Molossians.

The final group consists of those methods by which the patient has no physical object to reassure him and does not gain the comfort of touch. These include exorcism, commands to be well and merely being stared at, as advocated by the zouave Henri Jacob. Indeed, the sufferer may not be physically close to the healer, or at times even aware of his existence, as in some forms of absent healing.

There seems little connection between the evolution of faith healing methods and the intellectual evolution of mankind; although these groups are placed in what looks like an order of increasing sophistication no one seems more effective than the others; all are still in use and many healers do not confine themselves to a single technique or to one group of methods. Christ, for example, healed the right ear of Malchus by touch after it had been cut off by one of the disciples – a rare example of the restoration of a severed part of the body – and he healed the centurion's servant of palsy without going near him. Among the many other healing miracles performed by Christ is one of particular interest – the cure of the woman 'who had had a flow of blood for twelve years' (Luke 8. 43-48) – for in this case the sufferer who touched the border of his garment was healed without the conscious will of the Healer.

Christ healed the sick man of paralysis by commanding him to 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk'. Christ and the disciples performed many healing miracles and saints too have been known to effect cures by the power of faith: painting by Jan van Hemessen



National Gallery of Art, Washington

The disciples (who sometimes failed to effect cures 'because of...unbelief') continued healing after the Crucifixion. St Peter excelled: 'they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.'

Christ's instructions to the twelve disciples concerning healing were evidently not intended for them alone: St Paul, after his conversion, was able to heal and a famous passage (James 5. 14-16) implies that healing gifts were normally to be expected among believers – although St Paul drew attention to the likelihood of specialization in spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12. 30): 'Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?'

The ministry of Christ and the healing work of his immediate successors, which may have been responsible for many conversions to Christianity, was followed by a decline in the activity of unorthodox healers until its revival by the Spiritualist movement. Spiritualist healers believe not only that they have the gift of healing but that they are also actively assisted in their work by doctors and guides 'on the other side'.

Many unorthodox healers encourage their patients to continue in the care of their family doctors, a valuable safeguard to the sufferers. Unfortunately, this safeguard makes scientific study in the field very much more difficult because so few patients receive unorthodox healing only. Of the religious healing groups, only Christian Scientists reject the need for doctors, although this is by no means true of all members.

Seven Rules for a Miracle

Many Roman Catholic saints have been renowned for their powers of healing, both during their lives and after death, and indeed when a pious soul is being considered for canonization healing miracles are taken into account; shrines commemorate them and are visited by believers seeking miraculous cures. The best known of the Roman Catholic healing shrines is Lourdes, about which Dr D. J. West, in his book *Eleven Lourdes Miracles*, gives a wealth of detail, including the criteria for miraculous cure from the treatise on Beatification and Canonization by Pope Benedict XVI in the early 18th century.

There are seven requirements and all must be fulfilled; they are as follows. Firstly, the illness should be serious and impossible, or at the least very difficult, to cure. It should not be on the decline or of such a nature that it might in any case improve. No medication should have been given, or if it has been given, its inefficacy should be clearly established. The fourth condition is that the cure should be sudden, instantaneous; fifthly, it must also be complete. Sixthly, the cure should not correspond to a crisis in the illness brought about by natural causes, and finally, after the cure there should be no recurrence of the illness.

On the subject of Lourdes, Dr Michael Balint states that 'inexplicable, almost miraculous, healings occasionally occur in the average medical practice', and adds that they belong in the same category as authenticated Lourdes miracles – they constitute recovery from psychosomatic illness, slowly progressing tumours or chronic incapacitating states and 'as is well known in medicine these three types of illness may show sudden physical changes under normal medical treatment, or even spontaneously'. Dr West points out that 'there are no cases of lost eyes or amputated legs sprouting anew' although most Catholics would accept that God could and would achieve this if he felt it to be appropriate.

Attitudes among the Christian churches towards faith healing vary from total disapproval to intense enthusiasm. As I said in my book *Faith Healing*, 'Possibly there is today a consensus that God wants men to be healthy; that prayer and other religious techniques can help to bring this about; that paranormal cures must be attempted with love and are at best only a means to the end of salvation. Beyond this we find... many voices but little harmony.' However, the ministry of healing is not altogether neglected in Christian churches today.

Orthodox medical opinion as represented by the British Medical Association was summed up in 1956 in a booklet entitled *Divine Healing and Co-operation between Doctors and Clergy*. The medical committee concluded that they could 'find no evidence that there is any type of illness cured by "spiritual healing" alone which could not have been cured by medical treatment' and no evidence that organic disease is cured by the various methods of 'spiritual healing'.

This remains the consensus of scientific opinion, but it makes no impact upon the faith of those who believe that paranormal forces frequently intervene in human affairs; healers believe they have a vocation to heal; sufferers believe that they have been cured by such healers when orthodox medicine may have failed them. The majority are not concerned with how the healing in which they believe happens; but answers to this question range from the simple reply 'from God' to the statement that the faith healer 'is feeding in nervous energy into the patient's body at the point where it is "leaking out". It is "leaking out" at the site of the pain which the patient experiences . . . The healer's energy, applied at the site of the pain, runs up the patient's nerves and reaches the seat of the trouble.' (Faith Healing, *The Messenger*, June 1952).

Theories are continually being presented. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) began writing about conversion hysteria (a loss of physical function resulting from an emotional disturbance in the absence of disease) in 1886. Within recent years a vast amount of work has been done in the field of psychosomatic medicine. Both hysterical and psychosomatic disorders are, at least in their early stages, reversible and it is very likely that some of these illnesses lend themselves more readily to the unspecific methods of the faith healer.

Georg Groddeck (1866-1934) has been called the father of psychosomatic medicine, due largely to his paper *The Psychic Origin and Psychoanalytical Treatment of Organic Disease* (1917) in which he says 'I consider it a basic and dangerous misconception to suppose that only the hysteric has the gift of making himself ill for whatever purpose. Every man has this ability and each uses it in an extension beyond comprehension. In being ill a distinct purpose is served.' He went on to say 'A great many miraculously easy cures which we credit to suggestion or to the personal influence of the doctor are basically to be led back to the sudden realization...that man will no longer need this or that protection.'

The theory does not explain why the will to health may be aroused by unorthodox approaches after conventional methods have failed, but it does illustrate the possible complexity behind the simplest symptom.

The will to health may finally express itself in the patient who has failed to gain relief of illness in the usual medical environment; and even though such a patient may say that he does not believe in faith healing, he has, usually unconsciously, reached the point at which he must become well, and this is the time when the healer may contribute to the reversal of a psychologically-based illness or to the mental well-being of a patient suffering from organic disease.

Playing One's Part

Suggestion is relevant, to both orthodox and unorthodox healing. Argument still continues about the basic mechanism of hypnotism, which can certainly be used for the removal of symptoms, sometimes dramatically; and the removal of symptoms, of the greatest importance to the patient, has become medically respectable over recent years. This replaces earlier assumptions that the relief of symptoms without insight into the nature of their origin would result in relapse or in a group of new symptoms.

In discussing suggestion, the concept of 'role-playing' should be mentioned. In any given situation people will tend to do or say what they think or feel to be expected of them. In other words they fulfil the role indicated for them by the dominant factor in the situation – in this context, the healer. He will tell a sufferer, for example, to leave aside their crutches and walk, and at least for the time being that is what they can do. It is important to point out that they are able to do so because they feel expected to do so, even though they did not anticipate such a possibility. It has been established that experimenters tend to get the results they anticipate; this does not mean that they are in any way consciously or deliberately mishandling results but that their expectations are somehow communicated to their subjects.

It has not so far been possible either to prove or to disprove that faith healing cures organic disease, and further investigation is needed, particularly in the rigorous following-up of claims of reputed unorthodox cures. But man does not live by science alone, and so long as the obvious safeguard of medical supervision is respected it is unlikely that faith healing can do any harm. Indeed it can lead to an improvement in emotional state, in itself a good thing in that it makes life easier for the sufferer even though it may not basically affect the physical condition.

In fact, it is doubtful whether hard-and-fast conclusions will ever be reached on this subject. The existence of adequate medical records implies that patients have undergone medical treatment, yet it is only with such records that the existence of disease can be established in retrospect. And even in the case of the patient with a full medical history who has been 'given up' by the medical profession and has subsequently been 'cured' by a faith healer, the conclusions of the British Medical Association in the report mentioned earlier should not be forgotten: 'The evidence suggests that many such cases...are likely to be either instances of wrong diagnosis, wrong prognosis, remission or...spontaneous cure'.

It may be that without some dramatic breakthrough in the methodology of investigation faith healing, like faith itself, must, in its very nature, remain beyond the realms of science. It is neither proven nor unproven, a subject both for belief and for ridicule and controversy; but perhaps most important of all, a great source of hope to the otherwise hopeless.

LOUIS ROSE

A recent development in faith healing has been the practice of so-called 'psychic surgery' in the Philippines and Brazil (see PSYCHIC SURGEONS). The healer claims to make incisions in the body of his patient, perform various procedures and remove malignant tissue, without the use of instruments, and with little or no blood loss. In 1974 the American judge Daniel Hanscom concluded that the Filipino healers used sleight-of-hand techniques, producing blood sacs and animal tissue from their 'operations'. Despite fierce criticism the practice continues, and some of the apparent cures may well be due to faith healing.

(See also CAYCE; CHRISTIAN SCIENCE; HEALING GODS; LOURDES.)

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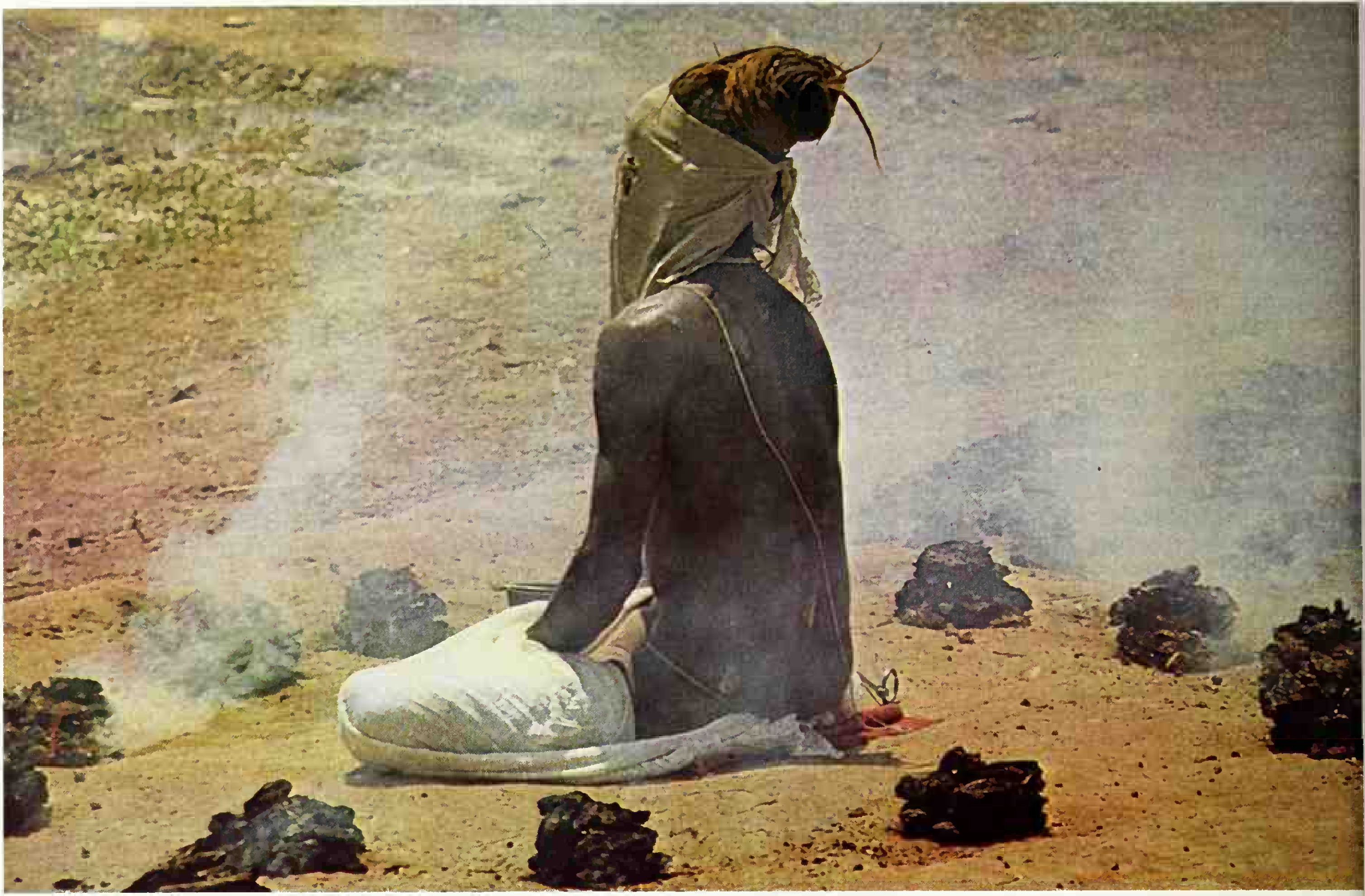


FAKIR

THE ARABIC WORD 'fakir' means a poor person, in the sense of poor in the sight of God rather than needy by misfortune. In the Islamic world it is used of those wandering mendicants who have renounced the world and put their trust in Allah, remembering the saying of the Prophet, *Al-fakr fakhri,* 'poverty is my pride'.

The concept of a fakir is clearly similar to that of the Christian friar. Although this is the strict usage of the term, fakir is generally employed in European languages to denote Indian ascetics, somewhat doubtful individuals often pictured in the popular imagination as lying on beds of nails. These latter are more properly named *sadhus,* but the word fakir is widely applied to both.

The Islamic fakirs may be divided into two groups, those 'within the law' (*ba shar*) and those 'without the law' (*be shar*). The former have always strictly based their lives on the doctrines of Islam, while the latter, although still describing themselves as Muslims, have been freer in their ways.

The ba shar fakirs are often called *salik*, a word denoting a traveller on the road to heaven. They have been organized in a large number of orders, all of which trace their descent back to either Abu Bakr or Ali, the first and fourth 'successors', or caliphs, to the prophet Mohammed. The earliest of these fraternities was founded about 770 AD. It seems that they were formed by religious enthusiasts to ensure the continuance and transmission of the teachings of the prophet, more in a social rather than a doctrinal sense. Frequently, an order of fakirs was drawn entirely from one walk of secular life – fisherman, camel-drivers and the like. These orders sprang up all over the Moslem world, obliging their members to devote time each day to private prayer and to attend a weekly prayer meeting called a *dhikr*.

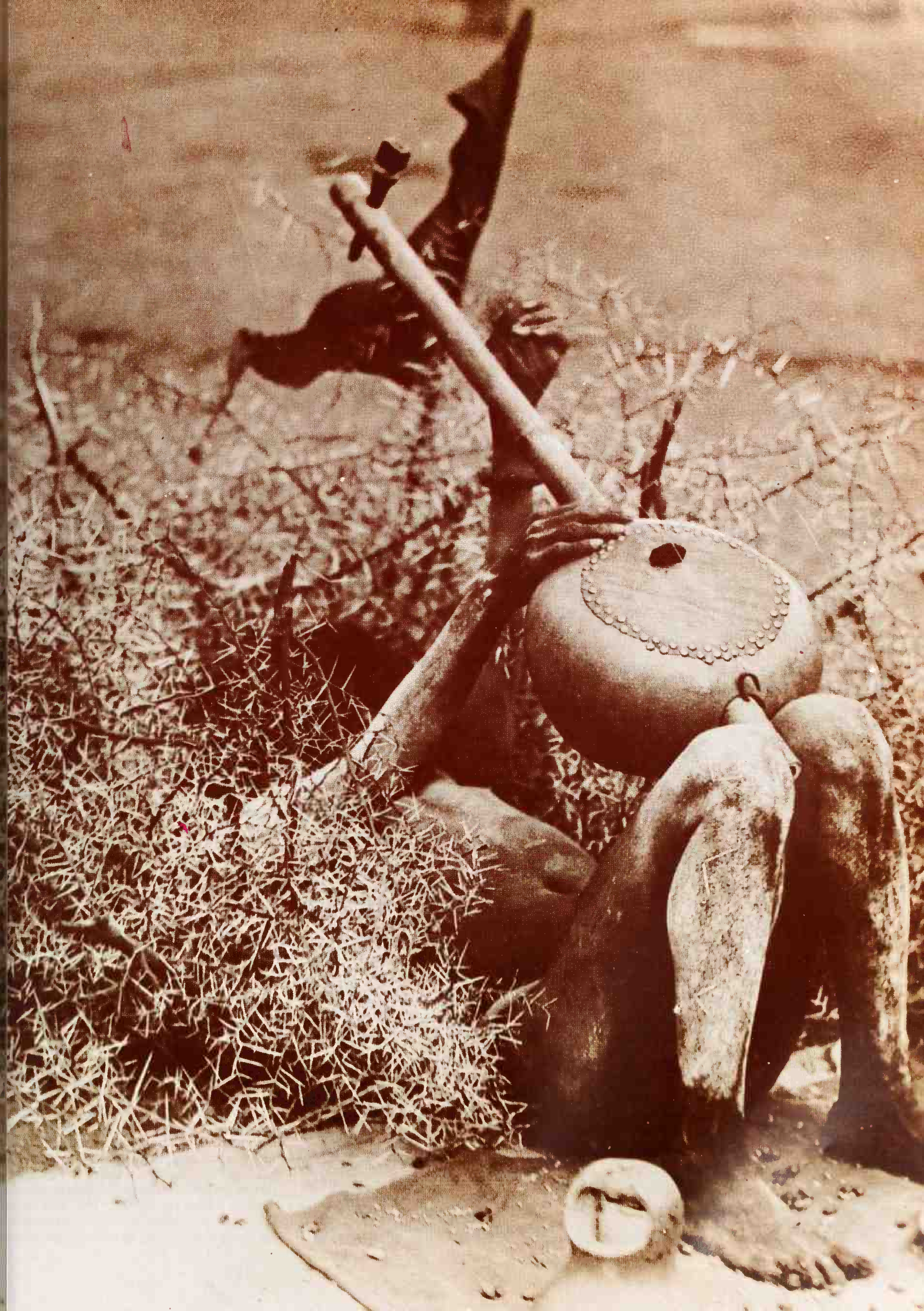
This Indian holy man does penance by sitting in a circle of burning sods during the hottest part of the day *Right* Indian sadhus who practise self-mortification often remain in one spot, in one position, for many years

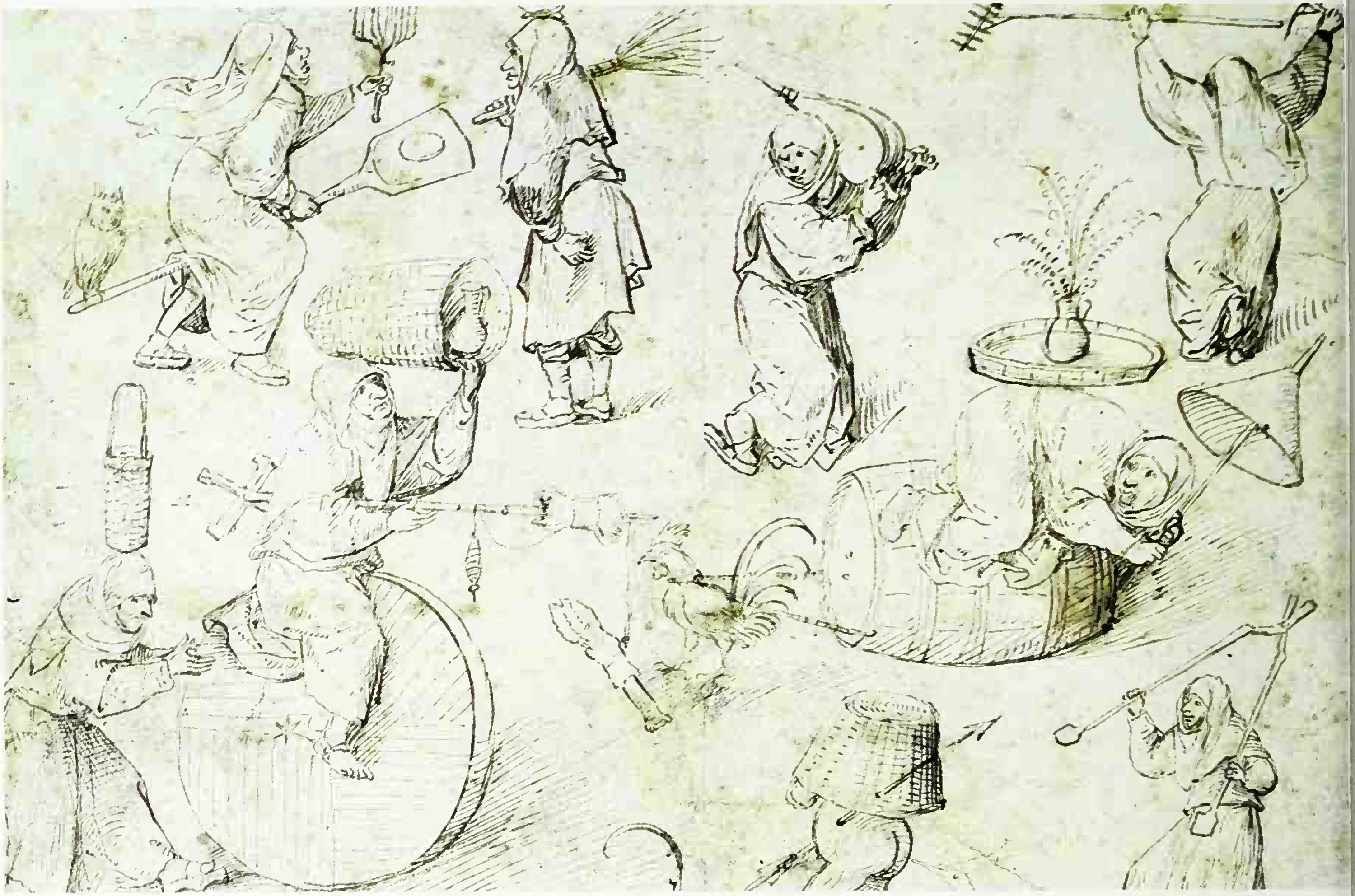
The be shar orders were also numerous and often indulged in extremes of asceticism and self-mortification. The most popular order was founded by Zinda Shah Murdar, whose shrine is at Makanpur, in India.

The Indian sadhu is a holy man, often an itinerant beggar, pedlar or wonder-worker, 'poor in the sight of God' like the fakir of Islam but usually more involved in the communal life of a still primitive country. Although sexuality may play an important part in the lives and practices of some, most follow rigorous asceticism – one sect, for instance, wear an iron ring on the penis to show that their sexual desires have been totally conquered. They engage in *tapas* – 'active asceticism', the implacable mortification of the flesh, as opposed to mere contemplative, passive renunciation of the world. Their aim is to acquire both merit and spiritual or magical powers. Some remain immersed in water up to the waist for long periods; others wander about the country trying to bathe in as many sacred rivers as possible before they die. Some keep constantly on the move, others lie, sit or stand upon the same spot for years, until (it is said) creepers cover their limbs and birds nest in their hair. Some do indeed lie on beds of nails, others practise various forms of self-mutilation including never unclenching their fists and allowing their finger nails to grow into the flesh. Many cover parts or all of their bodies with ashes, since ashes represent the primal matter, present in all things, revealed by burning.

The sadhu may often also be recognized by characteristic possessions – his staff, for instance, frequently topped by representation of a skull, a trident or a phallus; his crutch, to support his chin or arm during meditation and his body at burial; his begging bowl (though some are forbidden to beg); his tongs, with which he tends his ritual fire and also uses as a clapper to accompany incantations. Many sadhus earn a living by magic and witchcraft, maleficent and beneficent; others are fortune-tellers and interpreters of dreams, yet others makers and sellers of charms.

It is as well to reflect that when religion is a genuinely potent force, in a densely populated country still only superficially affected by modern technology, the religion of the market-place will, necessarily, be a very different thing from that of the palace or the cloister.





The petting of a small animal was often held to be proof that its owner was a witch. Many women were accused of giving suck to their 'familiars' in return for deeds performed by these supposedly supernatural companions

Previous page One of the 16th centur Chelmsford witches with her imp or familia **Above** Sketches by Breughel of witche capering and attempting to fly with broom sticks: they are attended by familiar including an owl and a cockerel **Right** A the sabbath demons were thought to assum the form of animals and the Devil himse often appeared as a goat and copulate with the witches

FAMILIARS

THE WITCH'S BLACK CAT has become firmly entrenched in popular imagination in Britain. Storybook witches all have cats as henchmen to help them with their spells and traditionally her cat is the one creature to which the witch is attached. Yet in the history of witchcraft the small animal kept as a crony appears fairly late, part of the final phase of witchcraft belief. Nor was the cat the only, or even the commonest, of the witches' pets: ferrets, rabbits, hedgehogs, mice or any small common animal, also figure in reports. Blackbirds and crows were fairly frequent, being traditional birds of augury. Toads and frogs were also regarded as suitable pets, being cold blooded, but fishes are never mentioned – perhaps because the fish is an ancient Christian symbol as well as an emblem of chastity. There were also more exotic 'familiars' like the one that was said to have appeared to Bridget Bishop of Salem during the outbreak of witch hysteria there in the late 17th century: 'A black Thing . . . the Body was like that of a Monkey, the Feet like a Cock's, but the Face most like a man's . . .'

Ideas of witchcraft at the Salem trials were a direct import from the England of a generation earlier. In the rest of Europe, the pattern and traditions were rather different. In the widespread Continental witchcraft persecutions of the 15th and 16th centuries, accusations concerning familiars seem to have played little part: the pet imp in the form of an animal was a typically, if not exclusively, British phenomenon. Accusations of familiar-keeping occur as corroborative evidence most frequently in the 17th century British witch-trials, possibly because witchcraft only became a capital offence under the second Witchcraft Act of 1604. This Act, which also provided harsher penalties for the 'wasting' of men's bodies or goods – an accusation easy to make and hard to disprove – was particularly unfortunate for the aged, the anti-social and the isolated who were most liable to become obsessively attached to small animals. Hence one of the modern stereotypes of the witch – the poor old crone, persecuted because she has only her cat for company.

Breast-Feeding the Familiar

While there is undoubtedly some truth in this image, the association between witches and the animal kingdom is far more complex and its roots go far back to the origins of sorcery. The use of animals' skins and masks in ancient witchcraft fertility rituals and the legends of werewolves are both reflections of the persistent idea that witches could, at will, turn themselves into animals. Tales of this kind crop up all over the world. In countries where the bear and the wolf (the oldest incarnations) died ou during the Middle Ages, the cat, alread associated with the witch for other reasons was substituted in the myth.

There are many 15th and 16th centur tales, chiefly from the Continent and fror Scotland, of witches who became cats a night for their revels and turned them selves back again into their human form a daybreak. Often these witches wer unmasked because wounds which had bee inflicted on the cats would be evident th next day on the bodies of highly respecte female members of the community.

Such tales, particularly those in whic the practitioner assumed animal shape whe she wanted to perform some evil dee unobserved, were confused by some authori ties with the keeping of familiars, but ther is a distinction: the true familiar spirit wa an imp or minor devil kept by the witch an distinct from herself. It was also distinc from the Devil in person. It was sometime given or sold to the witch *by* that gentlemar but here too confusions arose on account c the Devil's own habit of assuming a variet of animal forms. Thus Dame Alice Kyteler, a celebrated 14th century witch of good social standing, was said to be frequented by a dark man called Robert Artisson who also appeared to her on occasions in the shape of a cat or dog. Clearly this was thought to be the Devil-God himself – the name 'Artis' suggesting a possible derivation from a pagan deity of Mediterranean origin. (See KYTELER.)

Three centuries later, however, when the ancient fertility rites were further decayed and forgotten, those who reported on the trial of Abre Grinsett in Suffolk were probably mistaken when they assumed that the witch considered it to be the actual Prince of Darkness 'who did appear in the form of a Pretty hansom Young Man first, and since Appeareth to her in the form of a blackish Gray Cat or Kitling, that it sucketh of a Tett which searchers since saw in the place she mentioned.' Suffolk was then a backward, rural area; elsewhere by that date (1665) informed opinion had begun to take the view that it was surely unlikely that the Devil in person 'would consent to be at the beck and call of poor, doting women.'

In other respects the description of Abre Grinsett's familiar is within the classic tradition of such cases. The suckling of the familiar by the witch is a typical detail which throws light both on the true nature of the relationship and on the evil interdependence which was popularly believed to characterize it. The modern reader, inclined to take the part of the 'harmless old women' may believe that this tale of suckling was a dirty-minded calumny spread by the witch-hunters, but it should be remembered that such events are set in an era when people lived closer to Nature, when infants were universally fed at the breast for want of any other alternative method, and thus many women went on being 'in milk' and casually nursing other babies besides their own for the greater part of their reproductive lives. It was apparently not uncommon for an old granny, left to mind a baby, to put it to her dry breast just to soothe it if it were fretful. It will be appreciated that in these circumstances to give the breast to a treasured animal would be seen as an exaggerated piece of petting but not necessarily as an unnatural or perverted action.

In Russia, as late as the 19th century, there are cases recorded of peasant women being ordered by their masters to nurse bear cubs that were being reared for sport. It therefore seems likely that much of the evidence about women suckling their pets was quite genuine, especially since they themselves frequently gave the animals nicknames such as 'Suckin' or 'Titty'. A 16th century Somerset witch, for instance, stated that 'her Familiar doth commonly suck her right Breast about seven at night, in the shape of a little cat of dunnish colour . . . and when she is suckt, she is in a kind of Trance.' It is probable that what alarmed our ancestors was not the intimacy of the relationship between mistress and familiar, but the supposition that the woman was thus rewarding her creature for malevolent services it performed for her.

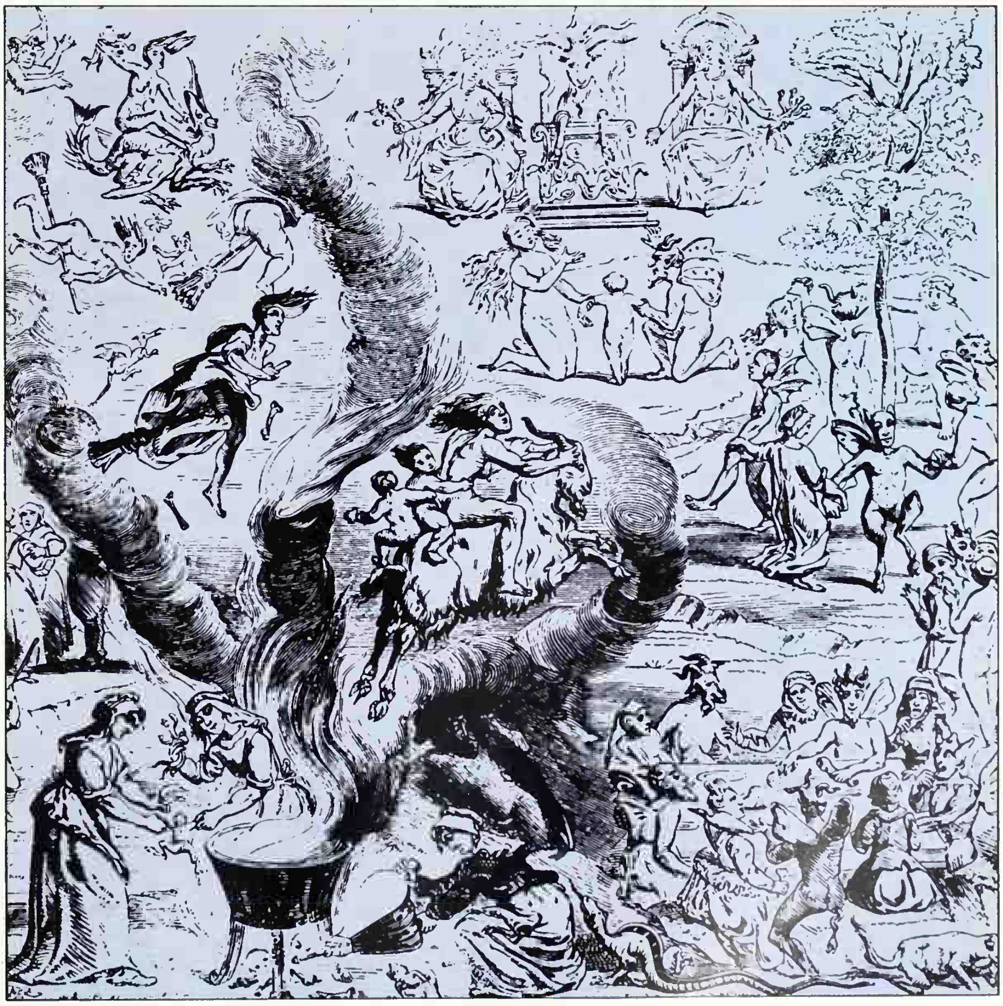
Cats Burnt as Devils

Some familiars were thought to carry the witch through the air to sabbath revels – a version of the common tradition that witches themselves could fly – though the evidence is further confused by the coincidence that 'cat' is also an old dialect word for 'stick' (broomstick). More commonly, the spirit was supposed to act as a medium for ill-doing. Elizabeth Device, one of the Pendle, Lancashire, witches, had a brown dog called Ball through whom she was said to attempt to kill people who had offended her (see LANCASHIRE WITCHES). Another classic case was recorded in 1619, when a witch named Margaret Flower and her sister Philippa were hanged at Lincoln for using witchcraft to murder the eldest son of the Earl of Rutland. She said that among other rituals intended to kill the Earl's children and render the parents sterile, she had rubbed certain personal belongings of her victims, which she managed to steal, against the body of her cat. To ensure that no babies would be born, she had obtained feathers from the Countess's bed and had rubbed them on the cat's belly: this meant that the marriage would henceforth be barren. It seems probable that this witch, like many others, indeed regarded herself as a witch and actually performed the actions stated.

The cat employed – and doubtless cherished – by the Lincoln witch and her kind falls into a different category from the luckless animal that Agnes Sampson and her accomplices seized at random, christened and then cast into the sea, in an attempt to bring about the death by drowning of the future James I. The christening and ritual sacrifice of cats was a piece of magic that related back to fertility cults and the ceremonial sacrifice of the god; it survived as a rite in certain places, notably Aix-en-Provence, till the end of the 15th century. Elsewhere it was generally replaced during the Middle Ages by the burning of live cats as 'devils' on Good Friday or other significant days – a good example of a barbarous practice originating from pagan rites but later sanctioned by the Church, unchanged in essence, and adopted for a different purpose.

There are shades of the sacrificed cat in the latter-day witch's familiar – it was not uncommon for witches to make a small ceremony of naming their pets, often with a name suggested by the Devil their Master. It is also significant that cats seem to have been employed particularly, as in the Rutland case cited above, to bring about sterility: Bast, the cat-goddess of Egyptian origin, patron of fertility, became in the Christian world associated with sterility, that reversal of fertility that consists of 'taking' things for the Devil.

Most true familiars, far from meeting a sacrificial fate, seem to have been particularly long-lived. Jennet Dibble, one of a company of witches who plagued the Fairfax family at Fuiston, Yorkshire, in the early 17th century, had 'her spirit in the shape of a great black cat called Gibbe, which hath attended her now above forty years.' Others were handed down from one



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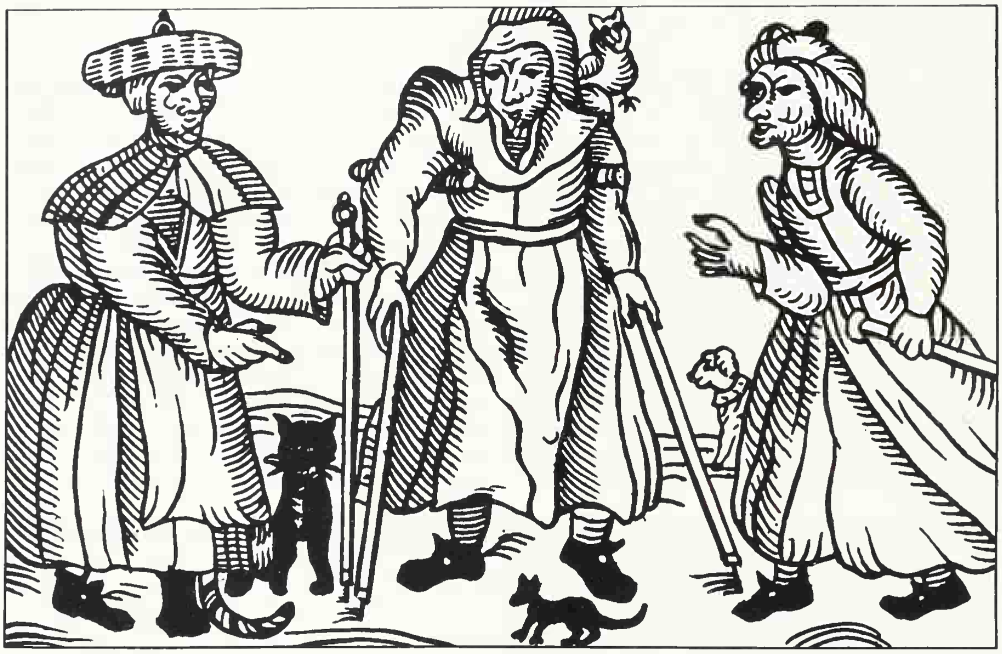
witch to another, a circumstance which reflects the persistence of the sorcery tradition in one place or family for generations. Elizabeth Francis, one of the Chelmsford witches arraigned in 1556, had a white-spotted cat called 'Sathan' who had been given to her by her grandmother and to whom she talked in a special 'hollow' voice. At the recitation of the Pater Noster in Latin it would change into a toad – shape-shifting was attributed to many familiars. She kept it 15 or 16 years until, wearying of it, she passed it on to another witch, Agnes Waterhouse. It was kept in a basket fed on bread and milk, and given a drop of blood every time it did something for her.

The belief that the familiar fed not only on milk but also on blood was a common one, which lent a more sinister twist to the character of the suckling familiar. Abre Grinsett's imp sucked 'at a Tett which Searchers since saw in the place she mentioned' that is, a special teat or 'witch's pap' which might be anywhere on her body but most probably 'in the secretest part'. There is ample evidence concerning these unnatural teats, which came into the wider category of 'witch-marks' and were, for a time, infallible proof of a witch.



Many witches were accused of keeping familiars to perform malevolent services for them: 17th-century woodcut from *The Strange and Wonderful History of Old Mother Shipton* showing an old witch standing in a magic circle surrounded by imps and familiar spirits which she has invoked

Matthew Hopkins, the notorious Witch-finder General who carried on his trade briefly but profitably between 1644 and 1646, employed a special female searcher to hunt out these 'paps' (see EAST ANGLIAN AND ESSEX WITCHES). Presumably some of them were quite genuine supernumerary nipples, which are not uncommon in either sex. Others were probably warts, or seem from their position to have been piles, though the searcher usually declared that they were unlike any piles she had previously seen. There is a contemporary engraving of Hopkins standing in an admonitory way over two witches and their attendant imps, among them a kitten, a rabbit, a polecat and a 'long-legg'd grayhound with a head like an Ox' called Vinegar Tom. Other names given to these familiars were Pecke-in-the-Crown, Grissel Greedigut, and Pyewackit. The outlandishness of these pet-names was considered at the time, by the unimaginative persecutors, proof of their Satanic origin.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that many of the defenceless old women arraigned with their pets must have been pathetic indeed, particularly when they were so confused in their wits as to implicate themselves readily. Delusion is not confined to paranoiac witch-hunters; it was found as often in the hunted, as a few of the more intelligent 17th century commentators pointed out.

There is also the fact that, though torture was never officially sanctioned for witches in England, many an arrested woman was certainly bullied and harassed – put in a cramped gaol, walked up and down, nagged at for a confession, kept awake and watched continually to see if any small animal should creep into her cell to visit her, in which case it would, of course, be a devil. As many of the country gaols of the period must have been squalid and tumble-down, infested with rats and cockroaches, it was all too likely that 'proof' should sooner or later appear.

This kind of circumstantial evidence on which a witch could be convicted (guilty unless proved innocent) is typified by the report of a trial at Bideford in 1682, a time when in better educated circles the whole reality of witchcraft was beginning to be called in question: 'This informant saith he saw a cat leap in at her window, when it was twilight: and this informant further saith, that he verily believeth the said cat to be the devil, and more saith not.'

But the keeping of pets was not confined to poor old women. At various times even eminent men fell under suspicion on this count including Oliver Cromwell, who was said to have a familiar called Grimoald. Witchcraft seems to have been an issue – if a covert one – in the Civil War, each side suspecting the other of practising it. It was whispered that the great storm that occurred on the night the Protector died was raised by the Fiend come to fetch him.

The distinguished German scholar Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) came under suspicion on the same count. A strange mixture of occultist and sceptic, worldly lawyer and genuinely original thinker, he made a thorough and intensive study of alchemy, astrology and the occult arts and developed an analytical faculty which eventually led him to speak out against the whole unscientific basis on which the witchcraft hunts were carried out. He denounced the Inquisition at Metz, his home town, and was forced to leave. Only his previous eminence and prosperity saved his life, for the automatic assumption was, as always when a witch-hunt is in process, that those who defend witches must be in league with them. At this point his pet, a much loved black poodle called Monsieur, naturally fell under suspicion as a familiar (see AGRIPPA).

That Animal Attraction

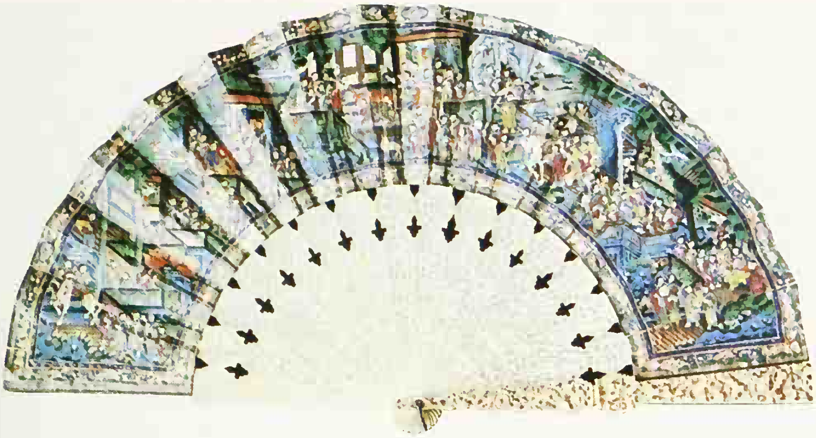
It is perhaps not out of place to end this brief survey of the place of the pet in witchcraft with a quotation from a memoir which has nothing to do with witchcraft but is by a man who, throughout his life (he died in 1967) was an outsider of a modern kind, a highly promiscuous homosexual. After several decades in which, by his own account, he expended a disproportionate amount of time and energy in seeking ephemeral sexual gratification, he unexpectedly found peace and fulfilment in a close (but non-sexual) relationship with an Alsatian bitch.

'I don't believe there was anything special about her, except that she was rather a beauty . . . She offered me what I never had found in my sexual life, constant, single-hearted, incorruptible, uncritical devotion, which it is in the nature of dogs to offer. She placed herself entirely under my control. From the moment she established herself in my heart and home, my obsession with sex fell wholly away from me. The pubs I had spent so much of my time in were never revisited, my single desire was to get back to her . . . the fifteen years she lived with me were the happiest of my life.'

The witch in the 17th century sense of the term may have disappeared, the animal-magic on which the ancient rites were based may be virtually extinct in our civilization, but the human need of relationships with the animal world is not extinguished. The plane of spontaneous instinct and sensation which the animal represents continues to exert a powerful attraction for us. (See also CAT.)

GILLIAN TINDALL

FURTHER READING: C. Hole, *Witchcraft in England* (Rowman, 1977) and *A Mirror of Witchcraft* (Irwin, Clarke, 1957); C. A. Hoyt, *Witchcraft* (South Illinois University Press, 1981); H.E. Wedeck, *A Treasury of Witchcraft* (Citadel Press, 1966).



Fan
Used throughout the world in religious ceremonies and processions; in the Middle Ages a *flabellum*, a silver plate or disc on a long handle was held by church officials to brush away flies from the sacred vessels, and fans made of peacock feathers are still carried by the Pope's attendants on state occasions: in Japan the spreading fan is an emblem of life and prosperity, and decorative examples are used by dancers to represent the rising sun, falling leaves and cascading waterfalls.

FASTING

THE DISCIPLINED CONTROL of the body's natural appetites as a means of spiritual progress is a practice which is common to virtually all religions, ancient and modern. Belief in the value of fasting is apparent in ancient times, as for example in the cults of Mithras, in those of Isis and Osiris and in the Eleusinian Mysteries. In the Old Testament, the fast that was imposed on the Ninevites (Jonah 3.5 – 10) involved not only human beings but also animals. And many other cultures fasted to purify themselves before rituals (as for instance the American Plains Indians before the great Sun Dance).

The purpose behind this denial of the flesh may be to atone for past sins and so avert divine wrath; to placate the gods in times of national calamity; or to prepare the self for communion with God by heightening the mental faculties and increasing spiritual receptivity. Indeed, the value of fasting for this last purpose is recognized not only in religion but in magic; the purpose behind Christ's fasting for 40 days in the desert before beginning his ministry may be compared with that of the magician who abstains from food and sex before attempting to perform certain tasks.

Fasting was an essential part of the Jewish religion from earliest times and *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, is still observed by practising Jews everywhere. Christ himself was careful to observe Jewish laws relating to fasting, although he spoke against the ostentatious practices of the Pharisees. Chief among the Christian fasts is Lent, the 40 days before Easter.

In the 6th century the Church introduced fasting as a penance for sinners. Many Christian mystics have seen in fasting the means to apprehend the vision of God: the practice was incorporated in monastic life as an aid to prayer, although excessive fasting, after the Reformation, was condemned along with other extreme forms of asceticism.

In the East, fasting has formed part of the practice of nearly all the great religions including Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam; in an extreme form by the sadhus and fakirs of India and the Sufis of Islam. In modern times Mahatma Gandhi adopted the practice for the twin purposes of using it publicly as a political instrument and privately as a form of self-punishment and atonement. Among his many 'fasts unto death' that of 1931 proved a successful form of protest against separate electorates for the deprived classes, 'the untouchables'.

In the world of Islam, the fast of Ramadan, enjoined by the Prophet, is observed daily for a month, during which the partaking of food, sex and tobacco is forbidden between the hours of dawn and dusk. In modern society, even schoolchildren over the age of ten are expected to observe Ramadan. Traditionally the moment when fasting is to begin is when the light of the dawn enables the faithful to tell a black thread from a white, and ends at nightfall, when he can no longer distinguish between these colours. In the words of the writer Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf, the purpose of fasting in Islam is 'primarily a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates a moral discipline.'

Today in the increasingly secular society of the West, fasting is more likely to be practised for reasons of health or vanity than as a spiritual exercise. But there is also a vague hope that from this chastening experience one will emerge 'a new man' or woman – preserving one of the original ideas behind fasting, that of purification. (See also FAKIR; SELF-DENIAL.)

R. K. Singh

Indian holy man fasting during the festival of Singhastha

Are we helpless vicims of fate or captains of our souls, prisoners in the iron chains of circumstance or masters of our destiny?

FATE

WESTERN LITERATURE is shot through with a sense of the inexorability of fate, of an invisible power beyond human control, which determines the course of events in the world, and which no human will can ultimately resist. The imagery of tying and binding keeps appearing, with fate as a straitjacket in which human beings are confined. Something fated to happen is 'bound' to happen, however hard anyone may try to prevent it.

Fate is an explanation of, and a scapegoat for, undeserved suffering. When some-one dies young or in agony, when people or animals suffer pain they have done nothing to merit, when someone seems dogged by ill luck, when life is thoroughly unfair, fate can be blamed.

Fate is envious and vindictive, and those who seem to be fortune's favourites have most to fear, for the wheel turns and the balance is righted and the bigger they come, the harder they fall. To tempt fate by being confident of success is dangerous. It attracts the attention of something that is waiting round the corner with a hatchet, something which the Greeks personified as the goddess Nemesis.

On the face of it, fate and free will are incompatible. Fate is a force or principle that decides what will inexorably happen, regardless of human decisions, while free will means that we can choose our actions and paths in life, and our choices will affect the future course of events. Death is the supreme example of an inexorable fate which awaits every human being at the end of the road, hence expressions like 'fatality' and 'fatal accident'. The word fate comes from the Latin *fatum*, meaning something that has been spoken, like the unalterable sentence of a court.

On the other hand, fate is also frequently spoken of in ways which imply that it is not inexorable after all. We talk about a man escaping his fate or changing it. Hero legends are full of tales of the hero choosing between two different fates. The great Greek hero Achilles had a choice when he was young. He could stay quietly at home and live a long, happy and inconspicuous existence, or he could die young in battle and win undying fame. Being a hero, he naturally chose the second path. So did the Irish hero Cuchulain, faced with the same choice (see ACHILLES, CUCHULAIN).

Much has been said about fatalism robbing people of decisiveness and inclining them to accept whatever happens as the decree of fate, but this is wide of the mark. In real life most people are not logicians and never have been. Most human beings have always been eminently capable of holding two contradictory opinions in the mind at the same time without the slightest discomfort, and most people have believed in both fate and free will simultaneously. We generally think that we have real choices to make in our lives, and yet that there is also a power which may bring our best efforts to nothing. We do our best, we do what we can, but ultimately success or failure are not ours to command and fate will decide. The two attitudes are both psychologically necessary, the belief in free will to support human dignity and morality, the belief in fate to prevent destructive self-criticism when life proves past human control.

The Divine Blueprint

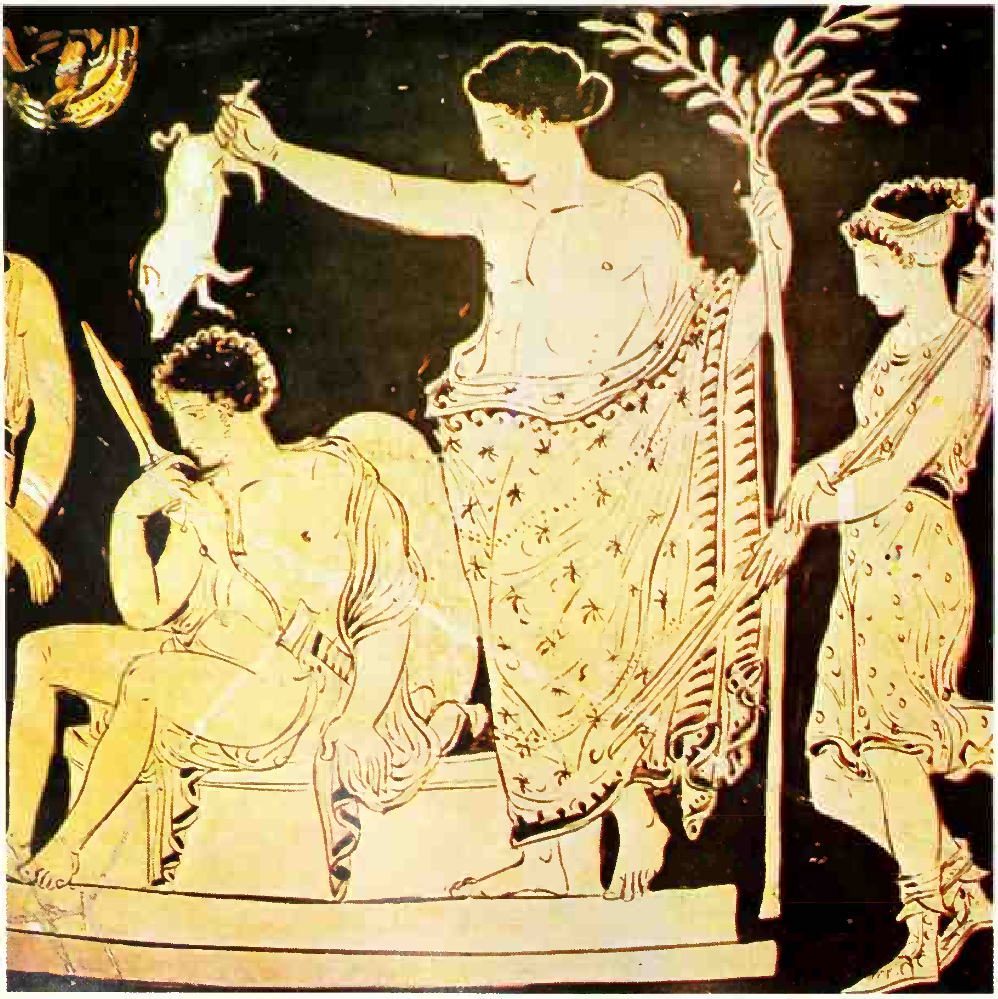
This pattern of thinking about fate seems to come to the West far more from pagan sources than from the Christian tradition. There is no room for fate in Christianity. What takes its place is divine providence, the plan and purpose of God, which human beings cannot alter. History is the unrolling of God's blueprint for the world and human kind. God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year, as the hymn says, and the duty of good Christians is to serve God's purpose willingly and play their foreordained parts in the plan.

The difficulty is that belief in divine providence shifts the responsibility for undeserved suffering from fate to God. It leads to the question, how can a God who is defined as both all-powerful and supremely good preside over a world in which there is so much unmerited pain and unfairness? In practice, too, Christian people's behaviour in real life does not usually suggest that they regard the future as preplanned and unchangeable. On the contrary, 'the Lord helps them that help themselves.'

Slice of Life

Lying behind the idea of fate is the very old and deep-rooted human disinclination to believe in chance. Things happen by cause and effect, and if something out of the ordinary occurs whose cause is not apparent, then an unseen power of some kind is held responsible. In Homer's *Iliad* a person's fate is his *moira*, his 'portion' or 'slice' of life – like a helping of meat on one's plate. If something happens for which there is no evident explanation, then either it is his *moira*, and it was fated to be, or a god or some lesser supernatural being brought it about. At the same time, the characters think in contradictory ways. Apollo at one stage fears that the Greeks may not wait for the day appointed by fate and may sack Troy immediately. Early in the *Odyssey* Zeus says that men's wickedness brings upon them suffering beyond what is fated.

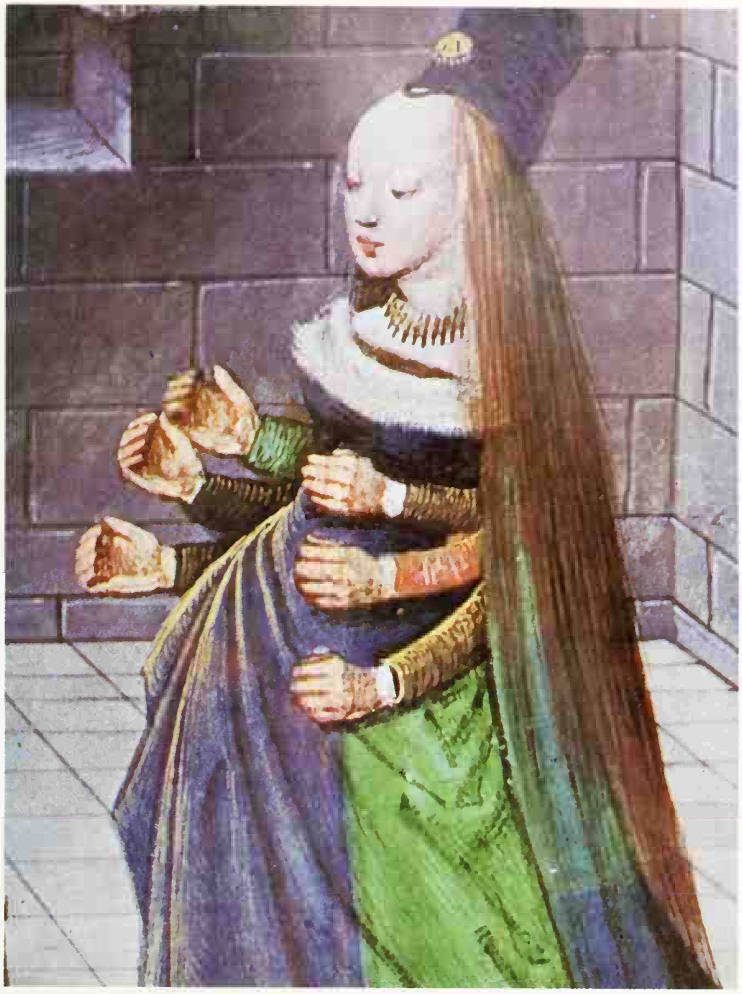
The *moira*, or portion appointed for each person, was personified as a group of goddesses, the Moirai. There were three of them: Clotho, who spun the thread of each man's life, Lachesis who measured its length and Atropos who severed it at death. The motif of tying and binding occurs again here, as the Moirai weave the tapestry of life. They were not thought of in a kindly



Giraudon

Left **Orestes, hounded by the Erinyes after murdering his mother, is purified by Apollo with a pig. The Erinyes or Furies carried out the decrees of the goddess of fate, punishing those guilty of patricide: Greek krater from the Louvre**

Eugen Kusch



British Museum

The common man, unconcerned with lofty concepts of fate and free will, felt himself at the mercy of capricious gods who had to be placated if the worst decrees of destiny were to be avoided *Left* A statue of Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of fortune *Right* Medieval representation of the goddess of fortune with six hands, symbols of providence and protection

ight and Hesiod called them 'ruthless, avenging Fates'. When a child was born, the Moirai were believed to visit the cradle to give the infant his helping of life. In Rome they were called the *Fata*, and from them we get the word 'fairy' and the good and bad fairies who come to a child's cradle with gifts of good and bad fortune.

The Doom of the Gods

Life in Scandinavia, struggling for survival in the stony, obdurate lands of the North, created an acute awareness of an unseen power inimical to human efforts. In the Icelandic sagas all the characters are convinced that they are in the grip of inexorable fate though, far from inducing a helplessly supine attitude, this inspires them to a determination to do what they please – and hang the consequences.

In Norse mythology, not only all humankind but the world itself is under a death sentence. Somewhere in the future the Doom of the Gods lies waiting. A terrible winter will hold the earth in its frozen grasp, monsters will arise to slaughter the gods and the world will sink beneath the engulfing waves. A new and better world will emerge from the destruction, it is true, but no one alive now will see that day. All this is fated, inescapable, and it is beyond the control of the gods, who will themselves be destroyed in it (see SCANDINAVIA).

The Scandinavian equivalents of the classical Moirai or Fates are the Norns. Three of them live by the well of fate beneath one of the roots of Yggdrasil, the world tree, and there are Norns who come to each child's cradle, to shape its life. The three fairy godmothers of German tradition are desended from them, and possibly also the three witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, who are called 'weird sisters' – weird from the Anglo-Saxon *wyrd*, 'fate'.

In the belief systems of the East, again, events are not thought to occur by accident and ideas of fate are bound up with the principle of cosmic order. In early Hindu tradition the word used for fate was related to the words for 'god' and 'divine', but a far more important concept in Indian religion and philosophy is that of karma, which is the law of cause and effect. Actions have consequences and the consequences of what we do in life play themselves out partly in this life and partly in our future lives. At the same time, we are free to choose the right path, and so to build up good karma, and eventually to escape from the whole cycle of reincarnations altogether. So we make our own fate (see KARMA).

The Tide of Destiny

In China, there was a tension between belief in a cosmic order (decided far above the level of mere mortal human beings, whose importance in the scheme of things could be compared to that of a flea in the folds of a garment) and the need to believe in free will as a foundation for human dignity, responsibility and morality – for if we are not free to choose our actions, then we cannot be blamed for whatever crimes and atrocities we commit. On the whole, most Chinese seem to have accepted the stoical view of Confucius, that each has a duty to do good and behave responsibly, and wait calmly for fate to take its course. Success and failure, happiness and length of life are not determined by men, but by fate.

Buddhism took the principle of karma to Japan, where there also developed a belief about Japanese national destiny which was to have important political consequences. Each individual person's fate was part of the broader destiny of the Japanese race, which by divine decree was destined to superiority over all others. This justified the suicidal attacks by kamikaze pilots in the Second World War (see KAMIKAZE).

In Nazi Germany, too, belief in a tide of destiny carrying the German people on to inevitable triumph and domination of lesser breeds was used as a prop of the regime, a justification for its actions and a source of optimism in dark moments. Visiting the eastern front in April 1945, Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels tried to convince the German army officers that 'for reasons of Historical Necessity and Justice a change of fortune must occur now.' When he returned to Berlin to hear of the death of

President Roosevelt, Goebbels took this as the expected turning point, but when no improvement in Germany's fortunes followed he concluded sadly, 'Perhaps Fate has again been cruel and made fools of us.'

The Stars Impel

Belief in fate and 'historical necessity' helps to explain the reliance of some of the leading Nazis on astrology, as a system for deciphering the coded secrets of what the future held. Astrology, like other systems of divination, has always been faced with the problem that if a fortune-teller can successfully predict the future, then the future course of events must already be fixed, but the fortune-teller's clients are hoping to change it. In practice, astrologers take refuge in the usual human double-think in which fate and free will are reconciled. 'The stars impel,' they say, 'but do not compel.'

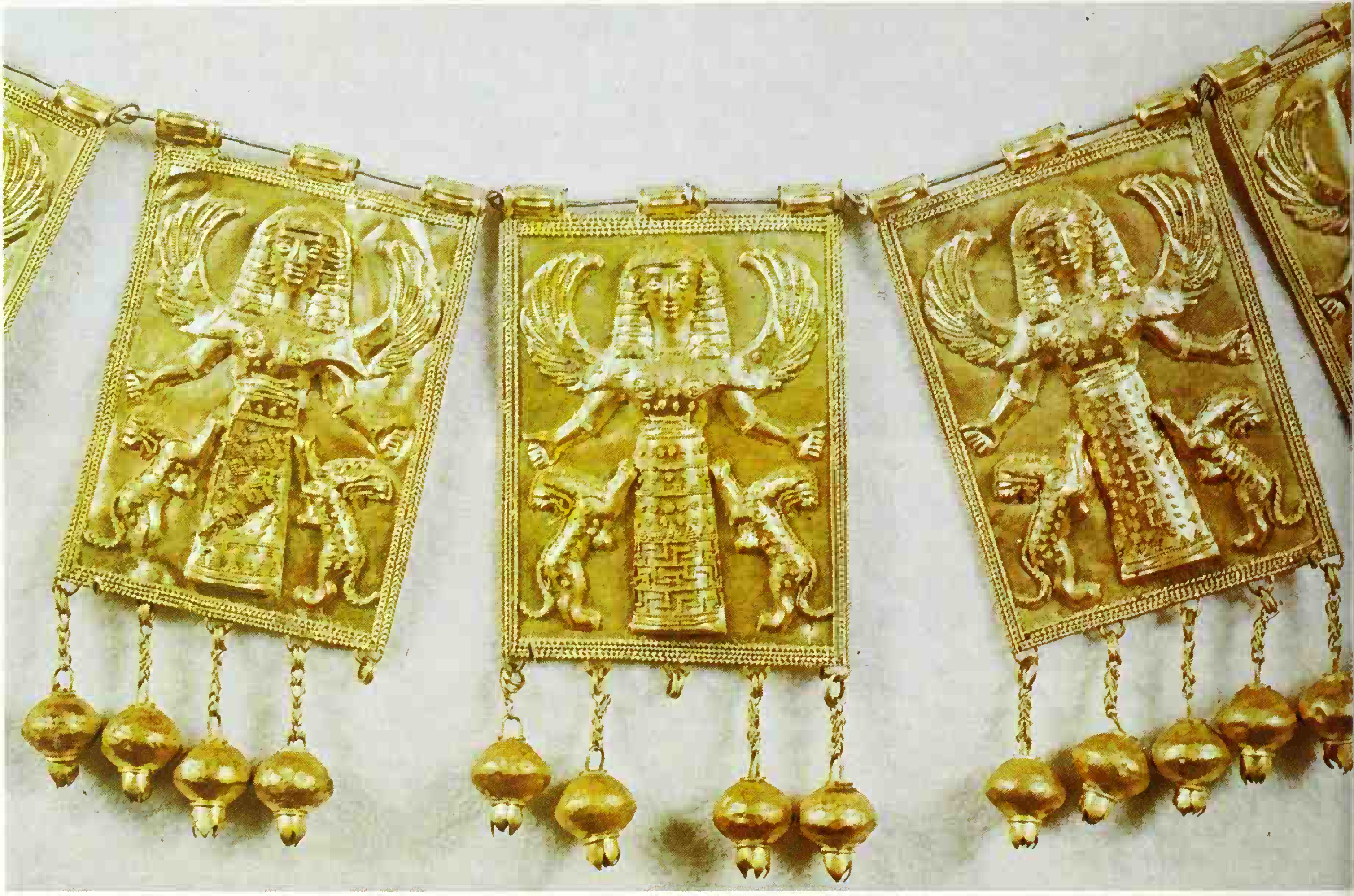
Astrology's long hold on human minds helped to bring fundamentally pagan ideas of fate into Christianity in the West. Christian writers condemned astrology for keeping pagan gods alive and for undermining human beings' responsibility for their actions, but astrology was far too deeply rooted. Medieval Christians reconciled astrology with their faith by regarding the movements and relationships of the heavenly bodies as signs through which God announced his plans for the future. The planets in the zodiac moulded each human being's character and caused events on earth, but human beings were still free to act morally, to sin or not to sin.

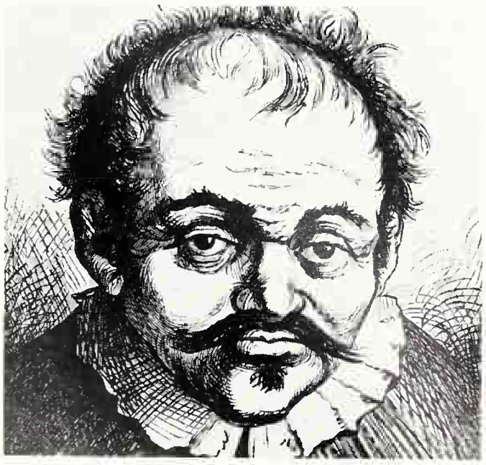
The survival of astrology meant that human beings could regard themselves, when they needed to, as the hapless playthings of fate. The doctrine of providence meant that they could think of themselves as being safely borne up by the sure hand of God. The two attitudes have co-existed together ever since.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

(See also ASTROLOGY; DIVINATION; LUCK; PREDESTINATION)

Greek gold pectoral ornament of the 7th century BC depicting the Lady of the Beasts, possibly Artemis; bells were often attached to amulets. because their jingling was thought to avert the Evil Eye and bring good luck





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From a disreputable dabbler in the black arts to the apotheosis of mankind's dilemma: the transformation of Faust over the centuries is as strange as any of the miracles claimed by this 16th-century magician

FAUST

THE STORY OF FAUST, or Dr Faustus, who sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for greater knowledge and power, has inspired countless plays and books over the centuries. Under Christian influence the revered magus of ancient days was transformed into a seedy charlatan who must suffer in life and face eternal damnation after death. Yet this terrible fate emphasized rather than denigrated the powers of the witch and the magician, who were consequently feared by most people, although secretly emulated by some.

The Reformation and the witch-hunters of the 16th century especially singled out the Faust tales, widely told among an uneducated populace, to serve as a dire warning against dabbling in the black arts to gain knowledge above that granted to ordinary men; Faust with his pact and mythical deeds became the archetype of the legendary magician.

The historical Faust may be regarded as little more than a pebble round which has gathered the moss of later legend, although undoubtedly, such a man existed some time in the early 16th century in Germany. It was formerly held that he was identical with a printer named Johann Fust (or Faust) who was born in 1400 and died in the plague in 1466, but this theory is now discredited. The facts about the 'real' Faust are still obscure and indeed the records relating to the name are so contradictory that it seems that they can only be accounted for by the hypothesis that either Faust possessed a dual personality – being at the same time a distinguished doctor of theology and a disreputable dabbler in the black arts – or that two men, Georgius and Johann, used the same surname. E. M. Butler has put forward an interesting theory that Georgius and Johann might have been twins.

A Faust who called himself Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior, and who claimed to be a necromancer, astrologer, alchemist, soothsayer and clairvoyant, was referred to contemptuously in a letter dated 1507 by the Abbé Tritheim of Spanheim in Germany, who called him a fool, an idle boaster and a charlatan. Several other contemporary writers had a similarly low opinion of this man, who it appears had to flee from his post at a school in Kreuznach when it was discovered that he had taken part in 'the most dastardly form of lewdness' with his pupils. In 1528 a Dr Georgius Faust 'of Helmstedt' was reported to be making wild astrological pronouncements and he was later to be banished from Ingolstadt for soothsaying. It is also recorded in 1532 that the city of Nuremberg refused a safe conduct to the 'great sodomite and necromancer', Dr Faust.

Over the same period it is recorded that in 1509 a Johann Faust obtained a theology degree at Heidelberg, where he distinguished himself brilliantly. Yet a few years later, in 1513, a man named Georgius Faust, described as 'the demigod of Heidelberg' (a title which would appear more appropriate to Johann) was overheard by the Canon of St Mary's, Gotha, boasting and spouting nonsense in an Erfurt inn. A number of other references to Faust between the years 1520–1540 are similarly confusing and fail to provide an answer to the question of the identity of the 'real' Faustus or to make it clear whether it was a case of dual personality or whether the records relate to two different people. It appears, however, that around 1540, his – or their – career came to an end, and prosaic records give place to fantastic rumour and legend.

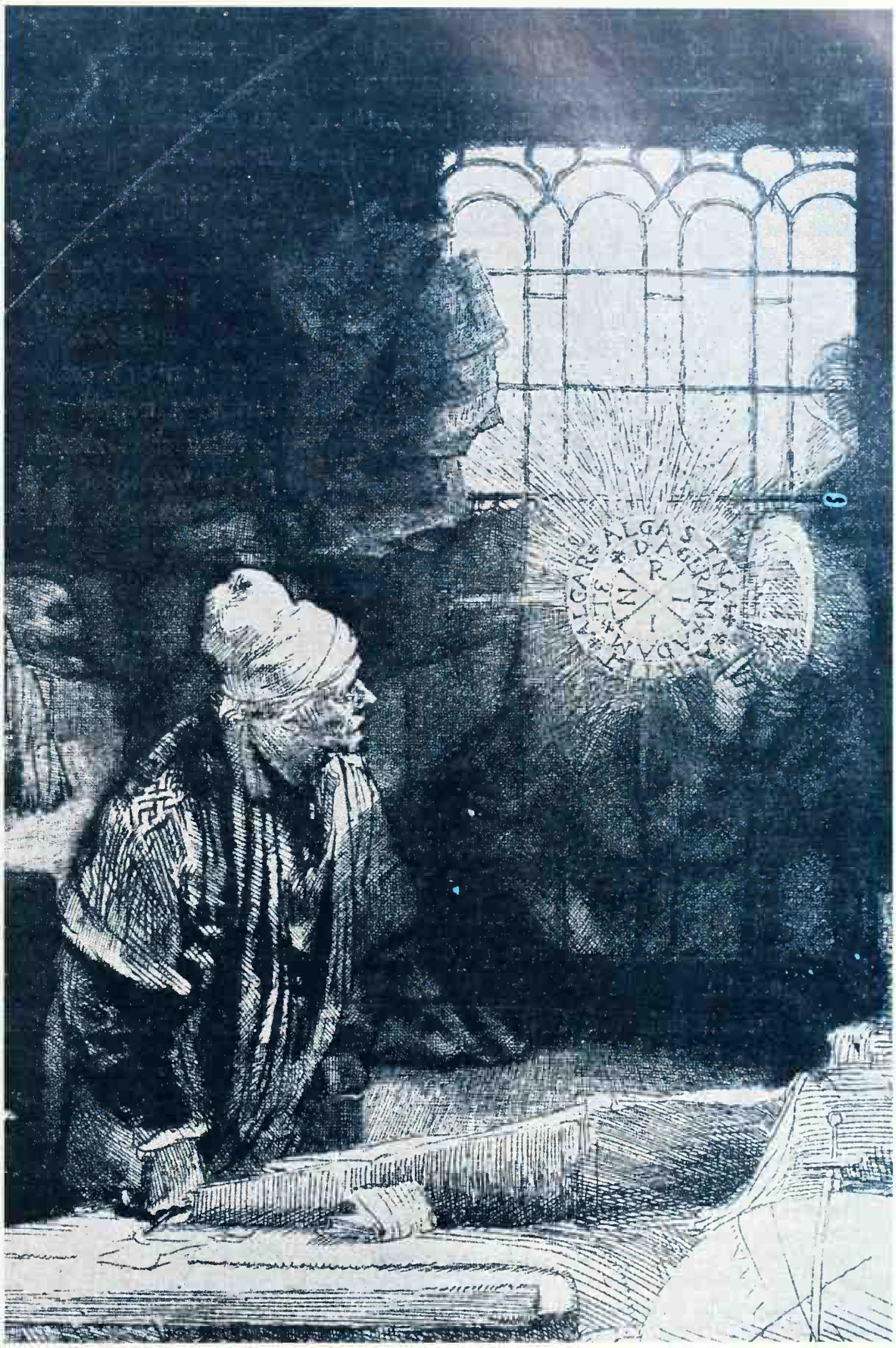
Miracles or Juggler's Tricks?

Whoever he was it seems that the Faust who was the basis of the later legend frequented the lower haunts of society, and consorted with charlatans, quacks and jugglers in shady taverns, where he boasted of his magical prowess and performed incredible feats. Thus it was first among ordinary folk that he acquired his supernatural reputation, and soon everyone was giving some wild but irrefutable example of the magician's uncanny powers.

It is not surprising that Faust makes little or no appearance in serious works on magic, for the humanist and genuine student of the occult poured scorn on his deeds, and were infuriated by the braggart who was a great magician solely in his own opinion. According to Faust's boasts his own miracles far outdid Christ's, and if the works of Plato or Aristotle were ever lost, he claimed he could not only reproduce, but improve them.

The fairly reliable recorder and demonologist, Johannes Wier (1515–88), exposed Faust as a charlatan in *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, and stated that the pseudo-magician had started the rumour that he was in league with the Devil, whom he familiarly called his 'brother-in-law' or 'crony', to give himself the mysterious reputation which had belonged to powerful wizards of the past. He refers to Faust as a drunken vagabond who had studied magic at Cracow and had practised this art throughout Germany 'with unspeakable deceit, many lies and great effect.' Another contemporary, the classical scholar, Joachim Camerarius (1500–74), spoke of Faust's 'juggler's tricks', and in 1539 a physician from Worms named Begardi classes Faust among 'wicked, cheating, useless and unlearned Doctors.'

A story supporting the view that Faust's magic was no more than trickery liberally laced with malice and impudence also suggests that he might go down in history as one of the inventors of a depilatory cream: the



Mansell Collection

Far left **Imaginative portrait of Dr Faust, described by contemporaries as a charlatan *Above* Later legends told how he performed feats of magic and made a pact with the Devil: *Dr Faustus* or *The Astrologer* by Rembrandt**

special arsenical salve he prescribed for a client, to save him shaving, not only removed his beard but also the flesh.

The legends might have lost their impact and become merely another thread in the tapestry of German folklore but for the rising tide of Protestantism, with its anti-humanistic leanings which strove to quench the growing thirst for knowledge, and its unquestioning belief in the unlimited powers of the Devil. It was Johann Gast, a Swiss Protestant pastor, who first attributed genuine supernatural powers to Faust. In a sermon preached in 1548, Gast described his experiences when he once dined with Faust in Basle. The fact that out-of-season game was served at the meal naturally counted as supernatural detail, and Gast declared that Faust's horse and dog – which often took the form of a servant – were really demons. Popular belief in Faust's dealings with the Devil was not only strengthened but encouraged by Luther, and his colleague, Melanchthon; the latter retold how Faust had swallowed whole a rival magician, and tried unsuccessfully to fly to Venice.

More 'evidence' was presented to an ever-credulous public, but who could doubt the truth of the earnest Lutherans' words? It was said that the Devil came in person to claim Faust at his death, and that the house shook and rattled terribly from the supernatural force. Some claimed that the body was torn apart, others that the corpse turned on its face five times despite the efforts of witnesses to lay it on its back.

Compared with famous contemporary magicians such as Paracelsus, Nostradamus and Agrippa, who were also suspected of having dealings with the Devil, Faust's own magical reputation was in some doubt, yet only this shady charlatan became the centre of an undying legend.

Face That Launched a Fleet

So little was known about Faust even in his own century that this allowed great latitude for myth making. Between 1570 and 1578 a manuscript collection of five more-or-less apocryphal Faustian tales appeared. However, Faust's widespread fame is due to his anonymous first biographer, whose *Faust-book* was published in Frankfurt by Johann Spies in 1587. Some of the anecdotes were taken directly from Hogel's *Erfurt Chronicle*, while others, which had been told about Virgil, Merlin, Pope Silvester II, Albertus Magnus, and Simon Magus, were re-attributed to Faust.

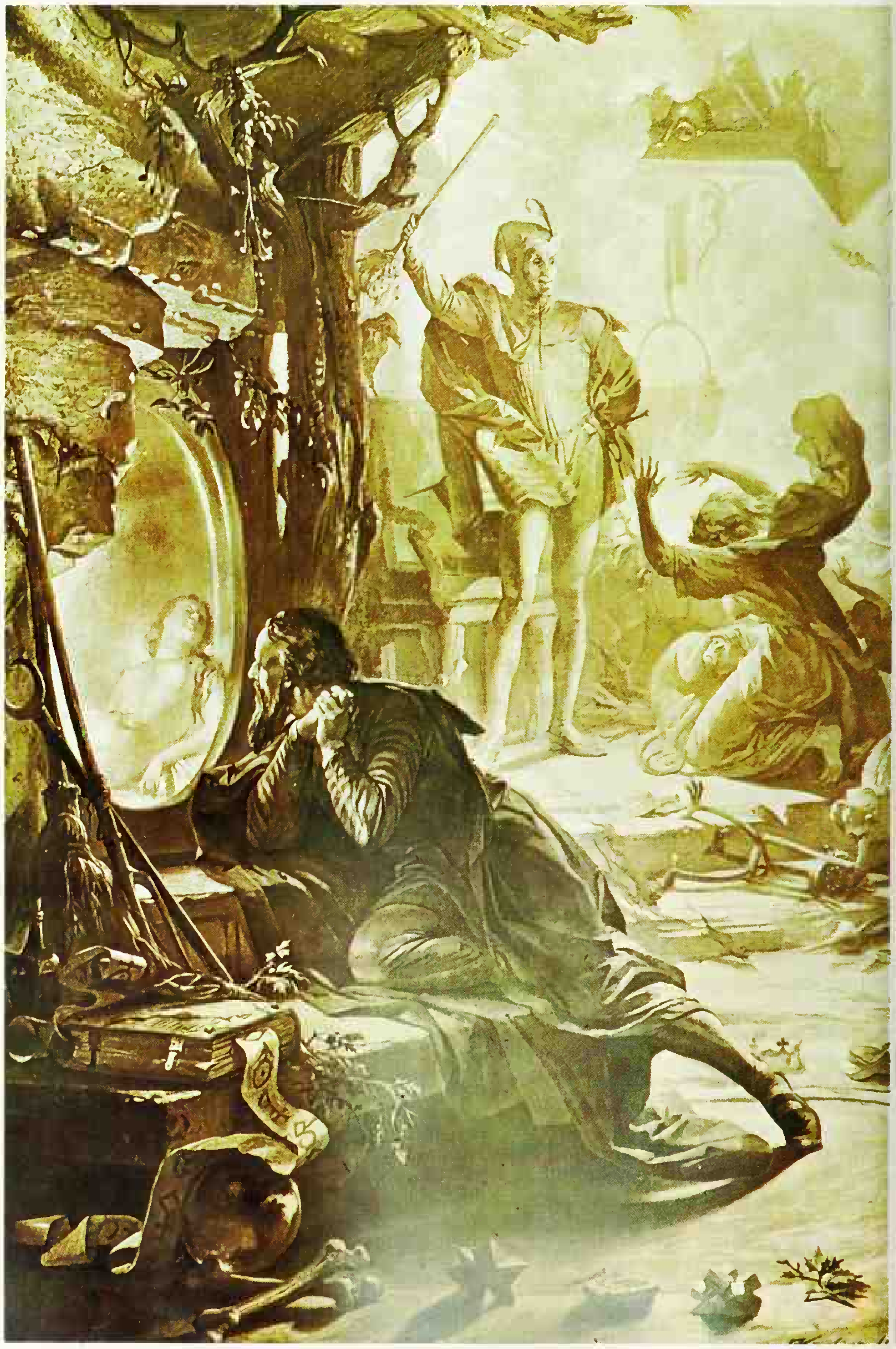
Although crudely written and spiced with heavy humour about Faust's dupes, the first *Faust-book* contained the inspiration for later really great works. The summoning of Helen of Troy from Hades, which ensured Faust's damnation, fired the imagination of the playwright Christopher Marlowe to write some of the most beautiful lines in English poetry:

> Was this the face that launched a thousand
>   ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
> Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!

The unknown author's obviously sincere belief in the truth of his tale, and his vivid evocation of hell and the anguished mind of the magician have an undeniable conviction and give tremendous dramatic impact to this cautionary story. Many of the original passages from the Spies *Faust-book* were incorporated by the modern German writer Thomas Mann in his powerful and moving book *Doktor Faustus* (1947).

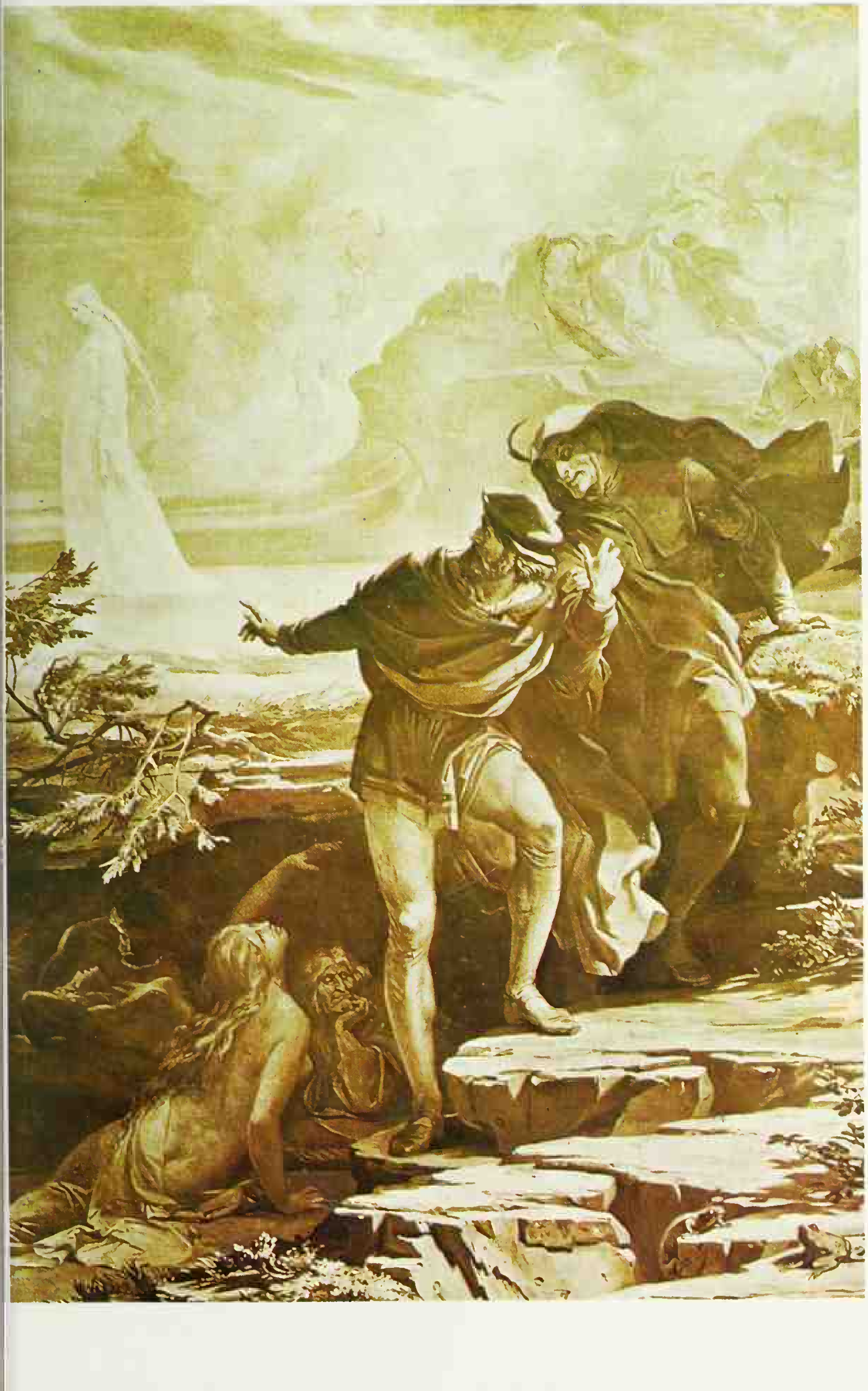
A fearful reality was also conveyed by the creation of Faust's familiar spirit Mephostophiles, which became Mephistopheles in the 18th century. The identification of a demon by name imbued it with a convincing and terrifying personality that could not be ignored. The first *Faust-book* was an immediate success, and was quickly translated into low German, Danish, Dutch, English and French, and later into Polish and Czech In Germany other versions soon appeared, one in rhyme.

In 1599 another *Faust-book*, by Rudolf Widmann, was published. It was a very mangled edition of the original, full of pious preaching, and blatantly anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic in its tone; this version was edited in 1674 by Johann Pfitzer. Lastly appeared around 1712 a version which became the most popular of all the *Faust-books*, under the anonymous authorship of 'A Christian Believer', it was entitled *The League with the Devil Established by the World-Famous Archnecromancer and Wizard Dr Johann Faust*. With the appearance of this well known chapbook the original *Faust-book* was almost forgotten, although its influence could be seen in much more



renowned and serious works. An English translation of 1592 inspired Christopher Marlowe's play *The Tragicall History of Dr Faustus* which appeared between 1592 and 1604. Marlowe's inclusion of a vein of comedy in the drama was instrumental in the degeneration of the original tragic tale into various farcical versions, such as William Mountfort's *Life and Death of Dr Faustus with the Humours of Harlequin and Scaramouche* produced in 1684, and John Thurmond's Drury Lane pantomime *Harlequin Dr Faustus* performed in 1724.

19th century illustrations to Goethe's *Faust*: in Goethe's version the magician is saved from eternal damnation by the intercession of God *Left* Taken to a witch's kitchen by Mephistopheles, Faust is tempted by the illusory vision of a beautiful girl *Right* At the witches' sabbath on the Brocken, the tragic figure of the girl he has used appears to him and he suffers a pang of conscience



Marlowe's play was imported into Germany by companies of English strolling actors in the early 17th century, and as few people understood the English words, the comedy elements were stressed. Numerous German versions soon altered the text, and dispensed with much of the original in favour of the use of spectacular devices and a lot of coarse humour.

For 200 years Faust dramas of this flavour were widely presented on the European stage, with Marlowe's theme more-or-less retained in all of them. An English puppet production was staged in 1728, and such performances were very popular in fairground booths throughout Europe. These puppet plays, although giving tremendous licence to the antics of Caspar, the clown, never failed to show Faust's tragic death and final damnation.

Debasement of Legend

Apart from the development of the Faustian theme in drama and literature, and later in ballet and opera, a very significant offshoot of the legend appeared in the form of magical books. They contained a jumble of ancient Chaldean words obtained from Greek and Roman papyri as well as elaborate Jewish rituals. Faust's name on the title pages, purporting to have written and successfully used the contents, as well as in the ceremonies and spells, widely publicized these manuals. The would-be magician of the 17th and 18th centuries believed, among other things, that the magic contained in these books could help in finding and raising buried treasure.

Compilers of these greedy and blasphemous works clung to the tradition that they could outwit the demons, yet in order to increase their sales utilized the name of the very magician whose own legend told only of damnation for dabbling in the forbidden arts. On the whole, the Faust of these magic manuals was a meagre, grasping fellow, who conjured up spirits to provide him with precious jewels or the Elixir of Life and threatened the demons into obedience. This is completely out of character with the Faust who vowed his body and soul to the demon Mephistopheles after 24 years in return for knowledge. The renunciation of God and an eternity spent in hell are very different matters from whistling up demons to do your bidding with the aid of an easily bought manual, and without incurring any risk to the magician.

The concept of magic in the Faust legend was dark and tragic, and the pact with the Devil the inevitable means of damnation. Yet, the Faustian rituals, no doubt partly in order not to scare off prospective buyers, ignored, denied, explained away, or even showed how to get around the diabolical contract.

Among the most famous of these manuals is *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* from the Grand Duke of Weimar's library. It gave the text of the soul-forfeiting agreement, but also showed how, while retaining the benefits, it could be renounced through the grace of God. It seems quite incredible that these mixtures of paganism, Devil worship and downright mumbo-jumbo should also have contained pious references to, and a confident belief in the intercession of the Christian God.

The Redemption of Faust

In the 18th century the German writers Lessing and Goethe, while obviously too enlightened to give any credence to the contents of these magic books, were well acquainted with them, and they introduced a totally new dimension into the Faust story: that of his eventual salvation through the intercession of God. Lessing was a

Scene from a National Theatre production of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*; Faust is confronted by the Seven Deadly Sins, Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth and Lechery

Reg Wilson

rationalist for whom the very quest for knowledge was the ennobling factor in mankind's evolution. He wrote a Faust drama (of which only fragments survive) and in some scenes suggested the magician's ultimate reconciliation with his maker. The idea appealed to a number of writers, including Goethe, whose much rewritten and revised *Faust* appeared in two parts: part one in 1808, and part two in 1832 after Goethe's death. The prologue in part one contains the promise of salvation and the final act in part two depicts Faust's redemption.

This masterpiece is not merely the retelling of an old legend with a differently conceived ending, but a philosophical and psychological study of the meaning of human destiny. Faust serves as the personification of humanity seeking wisdom. No matter what sins might be committed during that search, God will grant him salvation because of that very quest for knowledge and truth. In Goethe's *Faust* appears the final form and highest expression of the legend.

Other celebrated writers, however, remained unaffected by Lessing and Goethe, and belong to the traditionalist school of thought, adhering closely to Marlowe's tragic portrayal of a doomed Faust for whom there is no possibility of redemption. None of them seem able to accept Goethe's hopeful ending, and Paul Valéry's *Mon Faust* published in 1946, particularly emphasizes the harm in gaining absolute knowledge with its corresponding power. Thomas Mann's complex and symbolic novel referred to earlier, goes further in examining the very meaning of history, and the paradoxes inherent in an artist's nature and life.

European literature in the 19th century took the Faust legend and interwove it with another traditional tragic myth, that of Don Juan, as in Christian Grabbe's famous work *Don Juan and Faust* which was published in 1829.

From the shadowy reality of a despised charlatan, whose posthumous career took him through great as well as tawdry works of art, emerges not only the character of the legendary black magician, but also the apotheosis of mankind's dilemma.

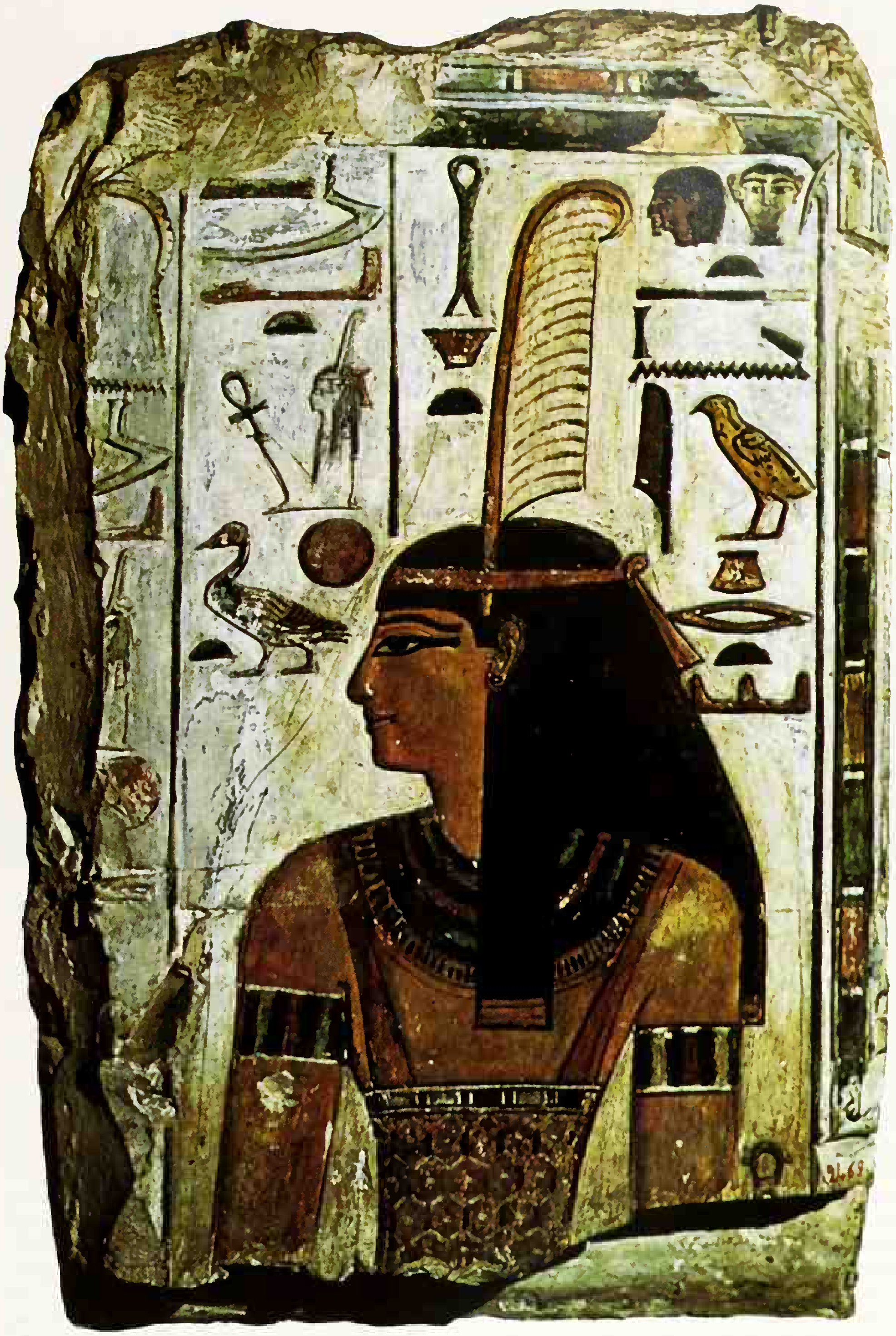
There are two choices of thought open to those who wish to delve into the tangled skein of Faustian legend: either that of the traditionalist who believes that man is inescapably doomed to destroy himself through his thirst for knowledge and power, or that of the salvationist, who must believe that no matter what transgressions mankind commits in his attempt to attain wisdom, God has vowed to redeem him.

SANDY SHULMAN

FURTHER READING: E.M. Butler, *The Fortunes of Faust* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); Robert Nye, *Faust* (Putnam, 1981); M. Palencia-Roth, ed., *Perspectives on Faust* (Humanities, 1983); P.M. Palmer and R.P. More, *The Sources of the Faust Tradition from Simon Magus to Lessing*.

FEATHER

THE PROVERBIAL LIGHTNESS of the feather – so sensitive that held to the lips of a dying man it betrays whether he is still breathing or not – is the aspect which the ancient Egyptians associated with the hairbreadth balance between truth and lying. In the old Egyptian picture-language, the hieroglyph for Maat, goddess of truth and therefore also of justice, was the ostrich feather, and in their ritual beliefs about death and the consequent journey to the underworld, the symbolic feather plays a vital role in the Judgement of the Dead. The deceased entered the Hall of Judgement, which was presided over by Osiris seated on his throne, clad in a tight-fitting robe of feathers, emblem of righteousness. Around the hall sat the 42 judges, each with the feather of truth on his head. The heart of the dead man was placed in one pan of the scales and in the other was placed Maat, or her symbolic representative the feather, to test the truthfulness of his testimony. Only if the two pans were perfectly balanced, did Osiris give favourable judgement: 'Let the deceased depart victorious.'
(See JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.)



C. M. Dixon

Facing page **Carnival dancers in Trinidad adorn themselves with thousands of feathers**
Above **The Egyptian goddess Maat wearing the feather as a symbol of justice**

Symbol of Peace

Of course many American Indian tribes also used feathers in this way, adding an extra feather to their headgear for every slain enemy. From this practice grew the superb traditional war bonnets of the Plains Indians – cascades of feathers (usually from the golden eagle) down warriors' backs.

The bonnets seem to have originated with the Siouan tribes; other Indians had their own sort, such as the Blackfoot war bonnet, a crown of feathers standing upright around a headband. But the usual inter-tribal borrowings led to the widespread adoption of the Sioux bonnets.

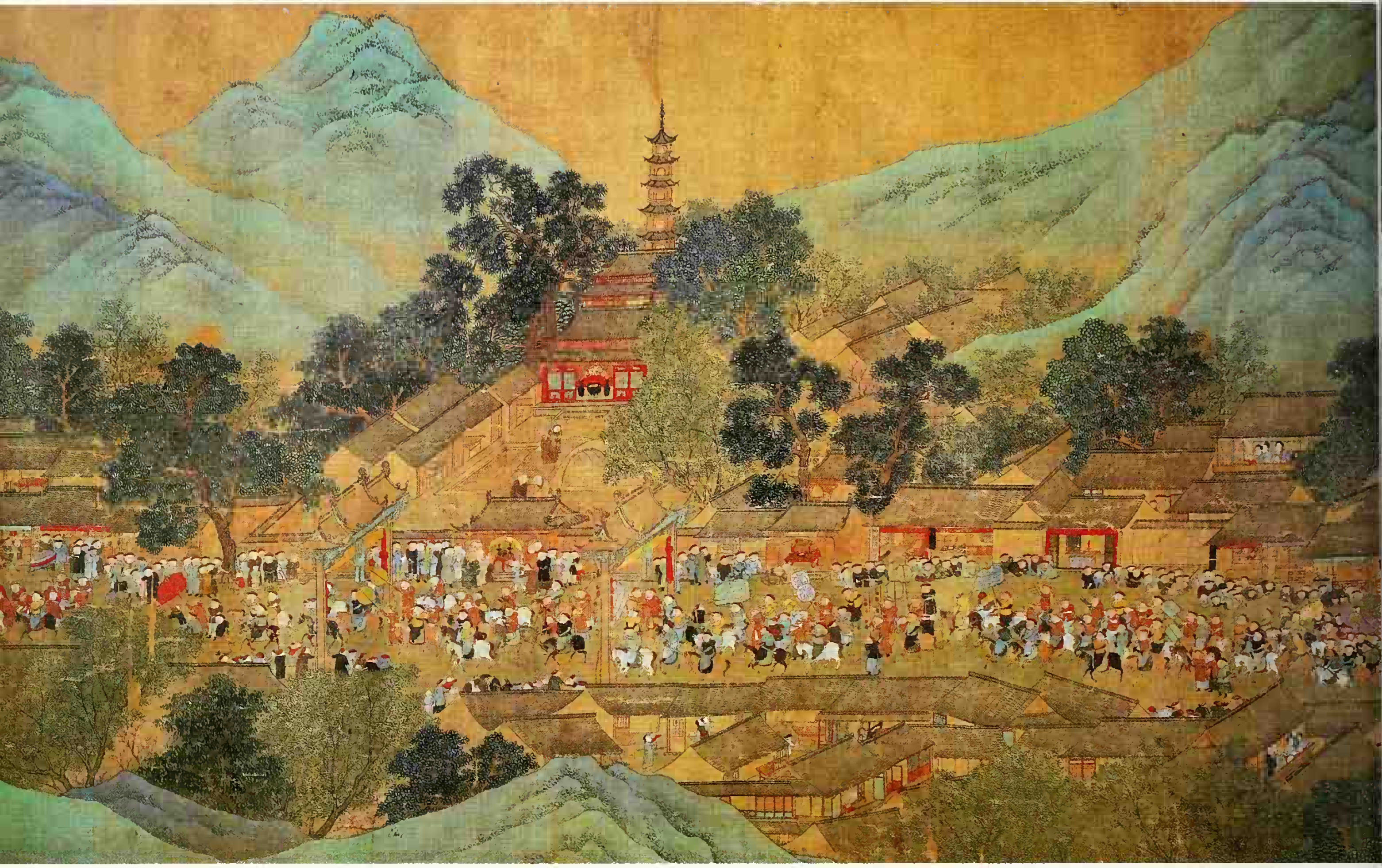
Feathers also functioned most centrally in American Indian religious practice – there reflecting a basic mythological idea, that birds are links and mediators between men and gods. Feathers had a mostly ornamental use for many north-west Pacific tribes, though such ornaments would indicate rank and status in highly status-conscious communities. (Similar considerations operated with the magnificent feather cloaks worn by Mexican and south-east American Indians; and the Creeks and others had turkey-feather fans to be carried during ceremonies as a sign of leadership.) But the north-west tribes also brought feathers into religion, in the form of down – which, as a symbol of peace, according to P. E. Goddard, was strewn over men's hair on all religious occasions.

More importantly, feathers were a major part of the ceremonial decorations on many of the objects used in Indian religious worship. Feathers decorated the calumet pipe that was smoked in so many rites of the Plains – and that was borrowed (from the Pawnee and others) by eastern tribes, Iroquois and Cherokee. The eastern Indians also borrowed an important rite called the Eagle Dance, in which feathers naturally functioned – mainly in the form of fans made from four eagle, turkey or wild goose feathers which were carried by the dancers.

Feathers have, predictably, many magical and ritual roles in the complex religious activity of south-western Indians. But their greatest prominence is as the primary symbolic decoration on the 'prayer sticks' that are so important to such tribes as the Pueblo or Navaho. The feathers seem to be the specific 'carriers' of the prayer that is being offered up by means of the sticks. Sometimes, indeed, a cluster of feathers not on a stick can have the property of carrying a prayer.

And it seems that different feathers can have different associations. So (to oversimplify the symbolism) eagle feathers that are tinted red are linked with curing societies, but in natural colours they are associated with the dead, as are turkey feathers; hawk feathers are connected with war, and so on.

In Hungary during the 15th century struggles against the Ottoman Turks, only a man who had slain a Turk was permitted to sport a feather. The so-called Prince of Wales's feathers, the crest consisting of three ostrich feathers, has a similar provenance. It was taken by the Black Prince from John of Luxembourg, whom he left dying on the field at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 and it has remained the badge of the Heir Apparent to the English throne.



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The ancient Chinese art of feng-shui is the practice of the orientation and integration of structures and buildings sympathetically into the environment, to increase the flow of 'subtle energy' through them, and hence improve their occupant's health and luck

FENG-SHUI

THE WORD 'FENG-SHUI', which means literally 'wind and water', was first translated into English as 'geomancy' in about 1870. This has caused much confusion, as the purpose of feng-shui is to regulate the geographic siting of current structures, while the purpose of geomancy (see GEOMANCY) is simply to divine the future.

In ancient Chinese encyclopaedias, feng-shui was often to be found under the section for *ti li*, which could be translated as 'land-patterns' or geography, rather than in the section for divination, and its practice governed the layout of roads, fields, lakes, plantations, temples, homes, even graves.

The flow of chi

Feng-shui encompasses not just the easily observable flow of water through the landscape, and wind across its surface, but also the supposed flow of a mysterious energy called chi (see CHI) which the Chinese consider exists in every living thing, including the earth.

Laszlo Legeza in *Tao Magic* explains: 'chi, the Vital Spirit, fills the world of the Taoist. It is the Cosmic Spirit which vitalizes and infuses all things, giving energy to man, life to nature, movement to water, growth to plants. It is exhaled by the mountains...as clouds and mist and therefore the undulating movement of clouds, mist, or air filled with smoke rising from burning incense, is a characteristic mystic representation of chi in Taoist art.'

Chi is seen as 'the force which through the green fuse drives the flower' to quote Dylan Thomas. It is assumed to be the life energy which increases fertility at every level, plant, animal, and human. If it is flowing strongly then plants are supposed to grow well, animals to fatten and reproduce, and man to live a fuller more energetic life. With the attendant increase in energy, so says feng-shui theory, so will the occupants of a house rich in chi live more fulfilling, luckier and richer lives.

At this point, the Western concept of luck as a fickle and purely figurative idea parts company with the Chinese view of luck as a commodity which can be husbanded or dispersed. For a Westerner, luck is something which comes and goes in its own time like the pattern of throws formed by a pair of dice. For the Chinese, practices which would be labelled superstitious in the West are used to husband this elusive and precious commodity.

There are three types of chi, the chi which purportedly flows through the earth, the chi residing in heaven, and between these 'weather chi' which mediates between the previous two and governs the movement of wind and water in the atmosphere.

Protected by trees from the cold influences of the north, the temple's main entrance faces south, painted, as are many of the village facades, in appropriate red: detail from the Emperor Kang Shi's tour of Kiang-Han in 1699

The chi flowing through what are picturesquely called 'dragon veins' in the earth and through the rivers on the surface of the earth can be modified by the changes to the surface of the earth caused by man's occupation, the building of roads or walls for example. The chi which flows in the rivers and watercourses is thought either to accumulate or to disperse from the land surrounding the river, according to the river's orientation. Changing or introducing watercourses or artificial lakes or ponds not only modifies the landscape but is also supposed to modify the chi concentrations in the site so altered.

The heaven chi is more mysterious and pertains to the concept that the gods also have a say in man's life and luck. The weather chi continues the flow of wind and water round man's dwellings and can to some extent be deflected by the planting of windbreaks, or by the selection of protected sites for building.

The most important of these varieties of chi is earth chi (*ti chi*). This must be seen to flow in a sinuous manner through or past the site. It must not flow to or away from the site along straight lines. Such lines, which may be made by road or railway lines or even the alignment of a neighbours' roof lines, are considered to bring *sha* or 'negative' chi. They act as if they were able to drain the site of its beneficial chi, as a river is drained of water if its banks are cut.

The result of this rule is that feng-shui practitioners attempt to hide or disguise any obviously straight lines approaching the site. Early European settlers in China found that the indigenous population dug up newly-laid straight stretches of railway track, and even demolished church spires.

The aim of the practitioner is to accumulate a gentle pooling of chi on the site, in the same way that a landscape gardener might encourage a fast flowing stream to fill an artfully-made lake. Bushes or trees may be grown to shield the occupants from the sight of a busy road. Where this is not possible, as in a house at the head of a T-junction, the property would be severely marked down in value. Doorways are likewise shielded so that strangers cannot see directly into the main living rooms. These principles both soften the environment, protect the inmates and, if the theory is to be believed, increase their wellbeing and luck.

Mountains and rivers

The shape of the surrounding visible landscape features must also be taken into account. If when facing south a jagged and displeasing range of mountains is visible, this too should be blotted from view. An encircling range of mountains of the proper form to the north, however, is seen as beneficial. Mountains are classified according to their shape and allocated to the seven traditional planets: for example, sharp peaked mountains are associated with the planet Mars and the element fire, while a plateau shaped mount with a flat top would be attributed to the planet Saturn and the element Earth.

Orientation takes on an importance which is beyond that of simply capturing the best aspect or view. Each cardinal point has a symbolic value. The south (which incidently appears at the top of all Chinese maps, which are drawn as if the cartographer always faced in that direction) is symbolic of warmth, light and life, and is associated with the Red Bird or the self-regenerating Phoenix. This is the direction in which, it is said, a building's most important functions, such as the entrance, should face. A compromise with south-east is also felt to be acceptable for good feng-shui orientation. The east is also considered a propitious direction, as it is the direction from which the life-giving sun arises. Its symbolic colour is blue, perhaps drawn from the blue of the China Sea seaboard, and its symbolic animal is the Azure Dragon.

The West is white, like the snows of the high mountains of inland China, and the White Tiger is its symbolic image. Indeed suitable sites for building a home or burying an ancestor have often been depicted symbolically as the point of sexual coupling of the Dragon and the Tiger. Should the surrounding landscape in any way resemble these animals couchant in their appropriate quarter, then the Chinese see the site as particularly beneficial.

The fourth quarter, the north, may be symbolised either by the Dark Warrior or the Tortoise with Snake, and feng-shui orientation is particularly concerned with protecting the site or building from the incursions of the cold winds of this quarter. It may in fact be that many of the rules of feng-shui, such as this one, derive from obviously common sense precautions, like planting a windbreak to the north of a site, and facing it to the (for the northern hemisphere) brightest quarter. Nevertheless, these rules have become mythologised, and are applied even where no obviously physical benefits can be perceived.

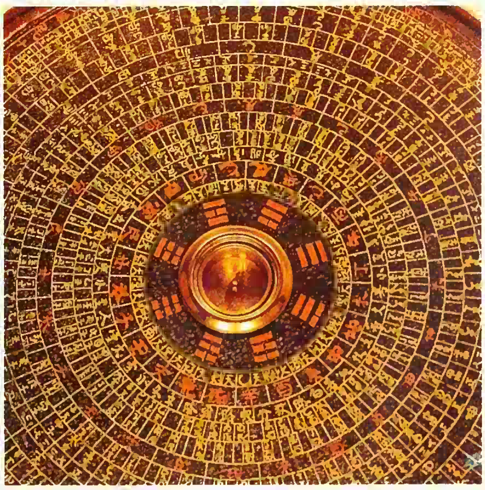
The symbolic colours of the quarters will be reduced by a modern Chinese practitioner to rather simplistic advice, even on the internal colour scheme of a house's decoration, by the recommendation of these colours in one form or another for the walls of the rooms approximately facing the corresponding cardinal points.

Yang chai and Yin chai

Despite official repression in China, and discouragement until recently in Singapore, feng-shui practice lies at the heart of the whole pattern of traditional Chinese landscapes, be it in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Singapore. Practitioners of the art can command fees in the same way as architects from building developers or house owners in places like Singapore, and increasingly even among the expatriate Chinese communities in San Francisco and London. Feng-shui has even been introduced into the syllabus of the Faculty of Architecture at Singapore University.

The advice of feng-shui practitioners sometimes results in the alteration of architect's plans, and even of already completed buildings. A recent case is the modification of the headquarters of the Hong Kong & Shanghai bank in Hong Kong. Other large buildings such as the Hyatt Hotel in Singapore have remodelled their foyers under the direction of a feng-shui practitioner, possibly in a superstitious bid to increase their trade.

On the domestic market, apparently good feng-shui has a distinctly positive effect upon prices where Chinese purchasers and vendors are involved. Property developers in both San Francisco and London, catering to purchasers from Hong Kong, retain feng-shui experts to advise them, mainly on elements of interior design.



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Modern Chinese feng shui compass, or *lo pan*

So far we have only considered landscape, housing and office buildings, all of which is referred to as *yang chai*, feng-shui theory for the living. There is however an extension of this referred to as *yin chai* which caters for the 'dwellings' of the dead, in other words grave siting. In this context *yang* and *yin*, meaning male and female, also have the connotation of light (living) and dark (dead).

The Chinese practice of ancestor worship – or at least propitiation – is a thread that has survived in their culture despite the imposition of religions such as Taoism and Buddhism. The belief is that it is important for the soul of the dead ancestor to be happy, both for compassionate reasons and, even more compellingly, for the welfare of his descendants. Accordingly the Chinese leave offerings for their immediate ancestors at least once a year if possible. The grave to which they bring the offerings is often an elaborate, armchair-shaped structure very carefully orientated according to feng-shui rules.

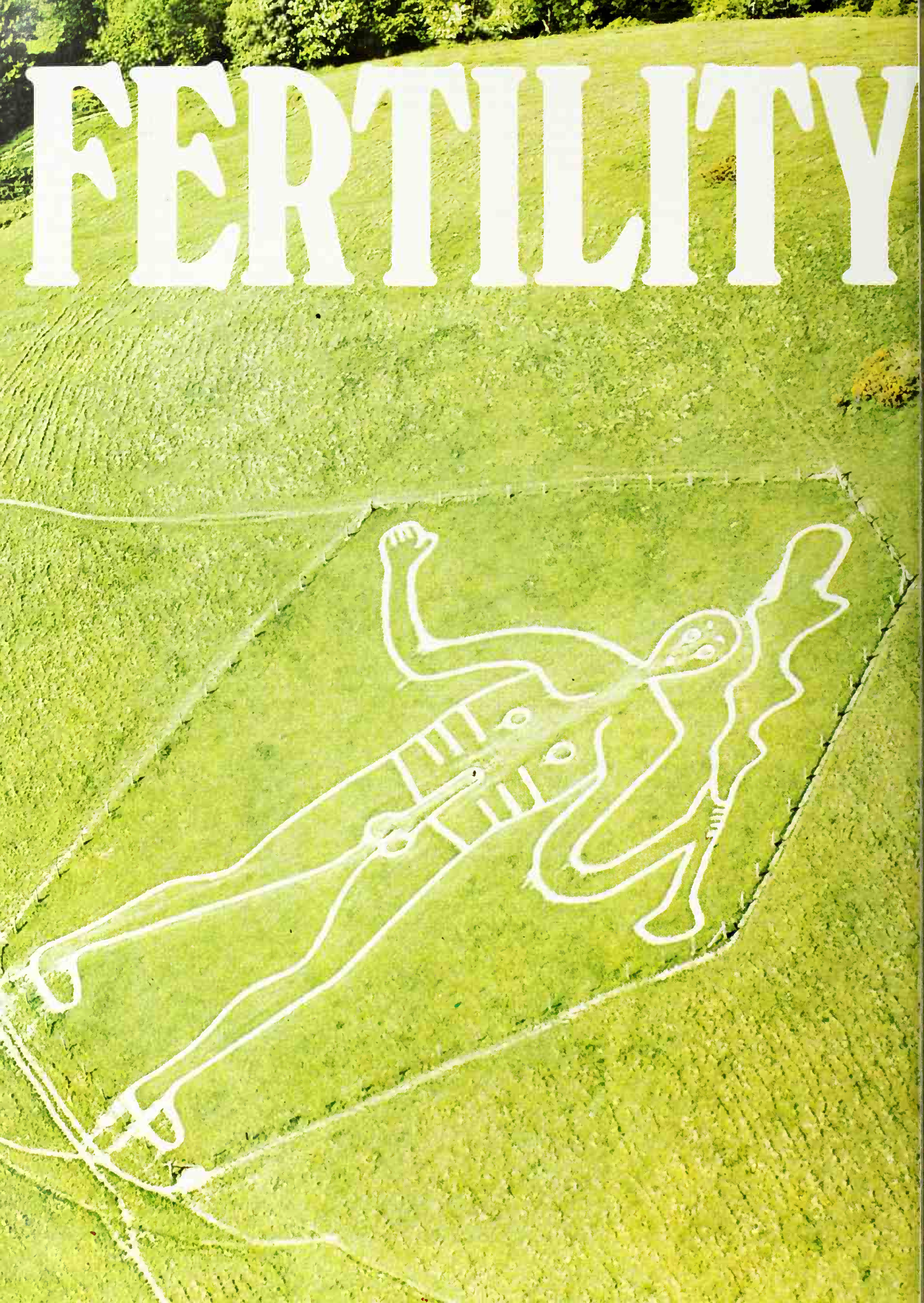
Time and Tides

There is a further dimension to feng-shui beyond direction and landscape configuration, and that is time. Each year, season and day has a directional correlation, and these are used to decide propitious days for starting renovation, or commencing to build. The result is that often, in Chinese residential areas, particular streets will deteriorate over a period of years, until with one accord the residents arrive at a propitious month for renovation, as determined by the orientation of the street, and simultaneously begin building and decorating works in the majority of the houses. Likewise, when it comes to grave construction, all graves built in a particular period will often all face more or less in the same direction, followed some years later by a different orientation for the next wave of grave sites – always bearing in mind a general preference for south-facing sites. Such symptoms of local Chinese life and customs, otherwise inexplicable, become obvious with an understanding of feng-shui theory.

There are two schools of thought in feng-shui: the Form School, whose most famous master was Yang Yun-Sung (c840-888 AD), which subscribes to the feng-shui rules above, with a stress upon mountain shape and the 'dragons' of the water courses near the site; and the Compass School, led by Wang Chih in the 11th century AD, which makes use of a very precise compass as well as site observation.

This magnetic compass, called *lo pan*, is thought by some scholars to predate the magnetic compass for marine navigation. It contained up to 40 complex rings of Chinese characters and symbols related to feng-shui practice, including the eight trigrams employed in the I Ching (see I CHING), and various astrological and astronomical data. Modern compasses, now somewhat more high-tech than their wooden predecessors, are sold in considerable numbers in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore.

FERTILITY



Jorgen Bitsch

Primitive man often made images of beings with exaggerated sexual features, hoping by means of magic to appropriate some of the powers of fertility with which those figures were identified *Left* The Cerne Abbas Giant, cut into a Dorset hillside, is shown with an erect phallus: it is thought to have been a cult figure of Hercules dating from Romano-British times *Right* The crudely erotic figures on this African hut in Chad are designed to promote fertility

Primitive man believed that fertility, the principle at the root of all life, was entirely subject to the control of the spirit world

THE FASCINATING WORLD of magic and religion is often bewildering due to the vast variety of beliefs and practices which a century and a half of scholarship has accumulated. It is drawn from every age of mankind, and from every corner of the world. Much of it is extremely remote either in distance or time, and therefore very difficult to interpret. And yet because of the common bond of humanity which links us with bygone races, the attempt at understanding should be made.

'Fertility' is an exceedingly common word in religious history. By it we mean firstly, the principle of reproduction and growth, as it is manifested in man, in animals, and in the plant world; and secondly, by implication, the belief that reproduction and growth can be controlled and furthered by magical or religious means.

Man has always had a passionate concern with fertility: it has been a consistent feature of almost every type of human society, and particularly, agricultural society. Consequently, scholars have often seized upon the ideas of, and the rituals connected with fertility, as a key with which to attempt to decipher the mysteries of primitive religion and magic.

Ripeness Is All

The obsession itself is not difficult to account for. Man's knowledge of the biological and physiological processes controlling fertility is of very recent date, and human life-expectancy only a century or so ago was assured only on condition of frequent reproduction, for as long as the female of the human species remained capable of bearing children. Death was perhaps a calamity; but not so great a calamity as barrenness. Human life depended, too, upon the fertility of the fields which man tilled, the fruit which he gathered, the animals which he ate, milked, or hunted. It is only in the technological societies of the West that man has become to some extent liberated from a life-and-death struggle for existence, in which the need to reproduce his kind, and to see his crops growing and his animals bearing young, has been paramount. Elsewhere in the world, and at almost any other point in human history than the 20th century, failure of fertility, whether of man, animal, or field, has meant simply and starkly death. Small wonder, then, that the idea of fertility has loomed so large in his thinking and feeling.

Man's constant attempts to promote fertility are equally easy to explain, at least on one level. We know that in the past, the world has not as a rule been particularly amenable to man's efforts to control it. But despite this, the human animal has obstinately refused to give in. We must not fall into the trap of supposing that archaic man's attitude to the world in which he lived was one of dull resignation. Where archaic and primitive man differs from modern man is that whereas modern man strives to master certain fields of knowledge and influence, and acts accordingly, archaic man was convinced that ultimate power was never in his own hands. There were sources of power, but these lay without exception in the spirit world – the unseen, supernatural world of gods, spirits, demons and ghosts. What man had to do was to establish contact and rapport with the unseen world, with a view to channelling and applying its power. For power was a property of spirit; and thus the spirit world had to be approached, and if possible controlled, if man was to have a share in its blessings. Equally, since that power could (and frequently did) work in ways inimical to man, it had to be propitiated and kept friendly, lest it should simply sweep him, his children, his cattle and his crops away.

If a woman conceived, it was not because she had intercourse with her husband but because the spirits had put a child into her womb

Fertility was entirely subject to the power and control of the spirit world, whose greatest gift was the gift of life. When life came into being, it was because the spirits had made it so; when life ebbed and disappeared, or was withheld, this too was the work of spirits. In this most vital area of human experience, there was no effect without its spiritual cause. If a woman conceived, it was not because she had intercourse with her husband, but because the spirits had put a child into her womb. If the corn sprouted in due season, it was because the Sky Father had impregnated the Earth Mother and caused her to bring forth. If a child died, it was not through disease or malnutrition, but because an evil spirit had stolen away the child's soul.

To archaic man then, the world appeared to be governed by its own immutable laws: not the biological laws we think we know so well, but the laws of universal cause and effect, of giving and withholding, of correspondence and adjustment. And fertility – which is, after all, only a convenient Western abstraction – was completely subject to this pattern.

Rhythm of the Seasons

The first characteristic of the pattern of fertility, as man has experienced it for the greater part of history, is its cyclical character. In the temperate zones the rhythm of the seasons, on which so much depended, was utterly reliable and could without difficulty be regarded as a divine ordinance, as in the ancient Hebrew tradition: 'While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease' (Genesis 8. 22).

In parts of the world where the seasons were less well defined, other patterns took their place – patterns dominated by the alternation of wet and dry periods, by the phases of the moon, and the like. To the seasons corresponded the stages in the growth of the crops, and the mating habits of animals. Crops, animals and humans had their appropriate gestation periods. The menstrual cycle of women was seen to correspond with the phases of the moon. All this adds up to a conception of time, not as an ordinary linear progression from point A to point B, but as an infinitely repeated series of cycles, in which growth succeeds birth, maturity succeeds growth, and death succeeds maturity. But even death was not the end, for spring came to drive out winter, and the annual miracle of the rebirth of the crops served to remind man that life was always latent in death.

Moravske Museum Brno

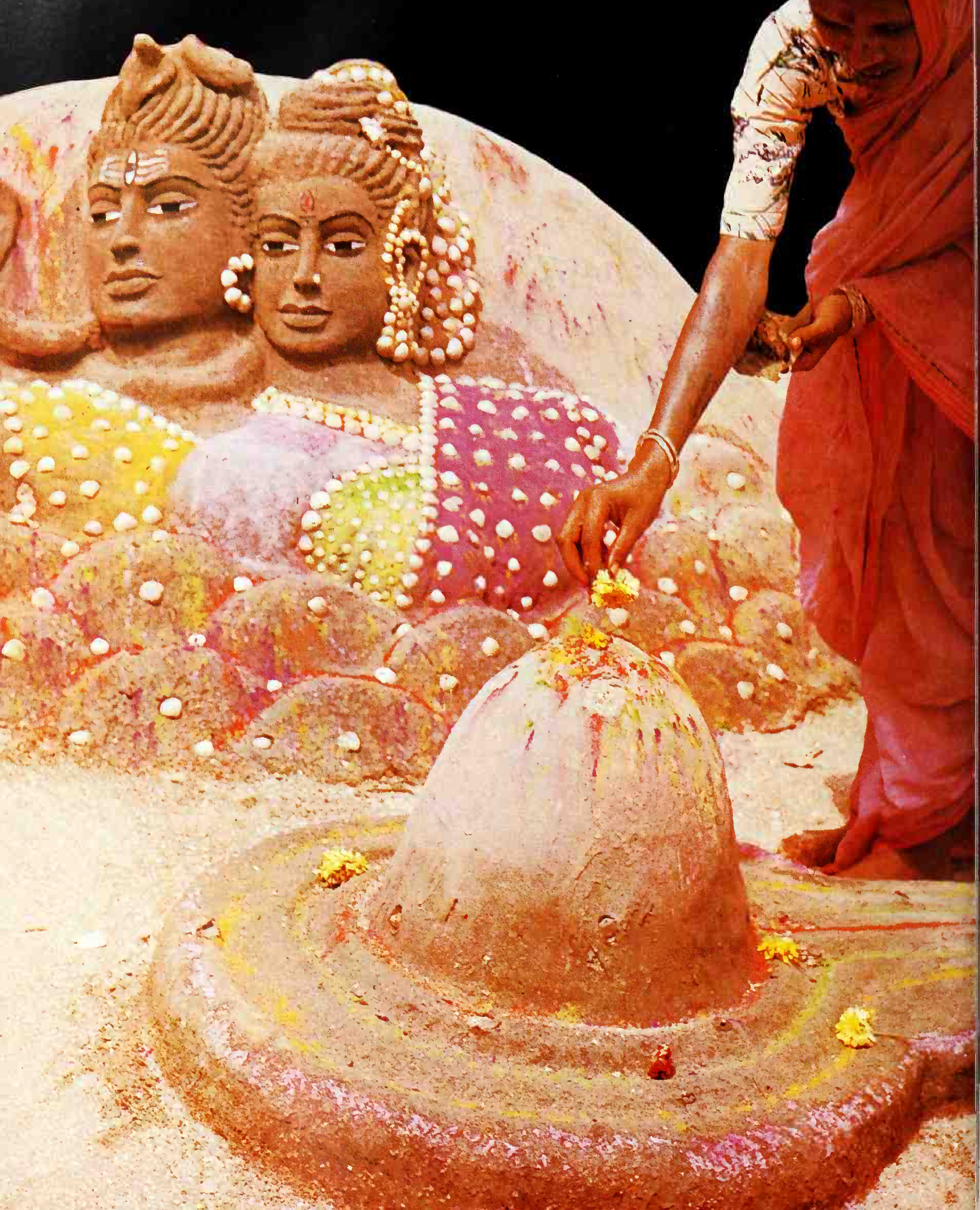
British Museum

Left Primitive 'Venuses', emphasizing the maternal aspects of woman, were probably used as fertility charms to induce pregnancy: 2nd century BC clay figurine from Yugoslavia *Above* Statuette of the Canaanite fertility goddess Astarte, now in the British Museum *Right* Erotic Indian carvings from the temple at Khajurajo, testify to the importance of fertility in Hinduism

It is easy thus to characterize the fertility cycle as a series of 'natural' phenomena; but archaic man did not think of it in that way. The power of life was not an impersonal entity, which merely needed to be left to its own devices. Accordingly we may say that its second characteristic was its personal, 'hierarchical' nature. Personal not necessarily because it was regarded altogether in human terms, but because it was able to be approached by humans, with whom it had some features in common, and could be, in some cases, communicated with. Hierarchical because it was thought of as a graded hierarchy of spiritual beings, from the mighty gods of the sky to minor, and in many cases malevolent, demons and ghosts.

Whether the various deities and spirits that went to make up the supernatural chain of beings were intrinsically benevolent or malevolent is an open question.

A devotee making offerings to the sacred images of the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati places flowers on the *lingam* or phallus in the foreground. The lingam is the procreative symbol of Shiva



The annual return of fertility was seen as a repetition of an original act of creation, in which order triumphed for the first time over chaos, fertility over barrenness

Many could be either or both, according to their moods and to the extent to which they had been acknowledged and propitiated. Perhaps it would be safe to say that any one of them *could* be dangerous, especially if slighted or ignored.

Art and Magic

The third characteristic of the fertility pattern, depended on the first two. The various cycles of fertility were thought to depend for their continuance upon the activity of the supernatural powers: the great cycles upon the great powers; the lesser cycles on lesser powers. In other words fertility, at whatever level, is always caused; it never just happens. Once the dependent nature of fertility in the thought of the greater part of mankind is recognized, it becomes clear firstly, that should the supernaturals choose for any reason to withhold the gift of life, this is a sufficient explanation for famine, failure in hunting, miscarriage and barrenness. And secondly, that the nucleus of primitive and archaic religion and magic alike concerns man's attempts to reconcile and appropriate the power, or life-force, that the supernaturals wield. Therefore man does what he can to ensure that the gods and spirits remain friendly. This may involve playing off one against another – a greater power against a lesser, or a benevolent spirit against a malevolent.

An example of this attempt to control Nature is the celebrated cave art of south-western France and the Pyrenees. It has been supposed by some authorities that their main purpose was magical: to ensure a supply of game animals, and success in hunting them. It has also been noted that the more dangerous the animal, the more often it occurs in the paintings, and the more seldom its bones appear in prehistoric kitchen refuse heaps. Scenes in which a bison, for example, is shown transfixed by spears or arrows, as well as recording an actual successful event may well have been intended to ensure repeated success. To this extent the purpose of the paintings appears entirely magical. But the underlying attitude, which saw the prey which a hunter hoped to catch as controlled by forces outside man's control, verges upon the religious; it presupposes the existence of a supernatural world, and the need for man to take that world into consideration.

Analogies from more recent pre-literate peoples may only be of limited value, but the various hunting tribes of the northern hemisphere (America, Europe and Asia) appear to exhibit a similar mixture of motives. North American Indian tribes, for instance, combine 'magical' rituals, designed to ensure the increase of the species, with a firm belief in the 'Owner of the Animals', who owns and rules the particular species in the same way as the Supreme Being rules over the universe and the world of men. The bear, which was always held in especial reverence, was hunted; but the killing was done with apologies and with as little blood as possible, and after death honour was paid to the skull. Doubtless the motive was in this case one of sharing in the great power of the bear; but in the case of the Ainu of Sakhalin Island in Japan, when a bear was killed, it was despatched with ceremony and sent home to its Owner, to tell of the good treatment it had received and to ask that more game be released. Should the Owner be offended, on the other hand, bear cubs would not be born and the bear could not be hunted (see BEAR).

Festivals to Ensure Fertility

In agriculture, the great fertility cycle is that of the seasons of the year, and in agricultural communities, two major events – the sowing of the seed and the harvest – were frequently the occasion for particular celebrations or festivals. Lesser festivals, though with virtually the same significance, took place at midsummer and midwinter. Traces of all these festivals survive to this day in the West, sometimes changed out of all recognition, sometimes – as in the case of the Scandinavian *Jul* (Yuletide or Christmas) – retaining enough of the original symbolism to demonstrate its origins. In the same way, the widespread 'first-fruits' and harvest rites practised by American Indians (in common with peoples all over the world) find a modern reflection in the American festival of Thanksgiving.

In all such cases, the objective was the continuation of the seasonal pattern, and the ensuring of a good and fertile year. The High Gods of the sky were the protectors of the cosmic order and the great givers of fertility, and so the festivals were centred, explicitly or implicitly, around the mighty deeds of these gods. A further feature which must be borne in mind is that the annual renewal of fertility was in very many cases seen as a repetition of an original act of creation, in which order triumphed for the first time over chaos, fertility over barrenness (see ETERNAL RETURN); accordingly, the festival itself was a magico-religious renewal of creation.

In the Babylonian *Akitu* (New Year) festival, the great epic of creation was recited, celebrating the victory of the god Marduk over the dragon of chaos. In addition there was a pattern of ritual, to which the myth served as a type of libretto. Centering on the figure of the king as the representative of the High God, this took the form of a symbolical dramatic confrontation between the god and the powers of chaos: chaos wins a temporary victory, law and order is forgotten for a time, the king is divested of his symbols of office; but then order is restored, rejoicing breaks out, the king is enthroned anew, and celebrates a 'sacred marriage' with a chosen priestess. New Year festivals of this type ensured the fertility of the land for another cycle. Since the power of fertility was in the hands of the High God, who stood at (or near) the head of the pantheon, only the king, as the head of the human hierarchy, could take it upon himself to approach the god and appropriate this power on behalf of his people.

The sacred marriage could be repeated on all levels of the hierarchy. Here, as elsewhere, we are confronted with an elaborate correspondence of man with the cosmos. The intercourse of the king and the priestess might be believed to further the fertility of the fields. References are scattered through the literature of popular religion and folklore to this practice. In the *Odyssey* there is mention of the occasion '. . . when fair-tressed Demeter, yielding to her passion, lay in love with Iasion in the thrice-ploughed fallow land . . .'. Intercourse on the field forms the climax of many recorded fertility rituals, and the 'May King' and 'May Queen' of European folklore may be supposed once to have symbolically fertilized the fields for another season.

This correspondence of function extends to the person of the woman and the 'person' of the earth. In mother goddess symbolism, the earth is regarded as a woman; conversely, the woman may be regarded as a ploughed field, and the male organ as the

plough. Regard for the sacredness of the 'body' of the earth has, however, been known to give rise to a refusal to cultivate it. A North American chief is recorded as having said: 'You ask me to plough the ground! Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest. You ask me to dig for stone! Shall I dig under her skin for bones? Then when I die, I cannot enter her body to be borne again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like white men! But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?'

The Water of Life

Fertility as resulting from the interaction of male and female is a principle which animates virtually the whole of primitive and archaic religion. There is reason to suppose that many High Gods were at one time thought of as being androgynous, that is both male and female, but in historical times, one or other principle generally becomes dominant, usually, in the case of the gods of the sky, the male. The High God was the god of the sky and atmosphere, and as such controlled the phenomena of the weather, particularly the sun and the rain. Examples of this might be drawn from very many sources – the Greek Zeus, the Roman Jupiter, the Finnish Jumala and Ilmarinen, the Babylonian Marduk and the Israelite Yahweh. As it says in the Old Testament: 'He covers the heavens with clouds, he prepares rain for the earth, he makes grass grow upon the hills' (Psalms 147. 8).

The idea of the High God as sole dispenser of fertility accounts, however, for only a small part of early beliefs. Lesser gods, ghosts and demons have their own proper areas of influence, too. In a surprisingly large number of instances, the fertility of man is thought to rest with ghosts. One African tribe, the Nyakyusa, believe that the departed spirits control semen and seeds, and are always present at intercourse. Another tribe, the Lele, believe that human fertility is controlled by spirits residing in the deepest and dampest parts of the forest. Water has always been regarded as a major factor in fertility and amphibian or scaly animals are thought to be close to spirits and therefore especially 'powerful' in this regard. The connection between fertility and rivers, streams and wells is obvious.

In Derbyshire, the custom of 'well-dressing', is still carried out at more than a dozen villages, during which wells are decorated with flowers and various rites performed. The origins of this custom are no longer remembered, but its significance is evidently propitiatory: each well had its own guardian, who had to be honoured, lest he should cause the well to dry up. The custom is now Christianized, and takes place on Ascension Day, immediately following the three Rogation Days – days on which God's blessing is asked for the crops.

In India, there is a sacred grove, near Tiruttani, in Tamilnad, containing seven pools, or *yonis* (this is also the word for the female organ). Round the pools there are trees, in many of which votive offerings are hung by women wanting children. Offerings are similarly made in the precincts of many Hindu temples, usually under a pair of trees, male and female.

The Potent Gods

The symbolism and mythology of fertility in the cosmos corresponds to the interaction of male and female which is so large a part of human experience. In the cosmos, as in human experience, the generative power of the father is met and accepted by the receptive fecundity of the mother. A common overall pattern is therefore that of the Sky Father and the Earth Mother, repeated, with infinite variations, through the world of religions.

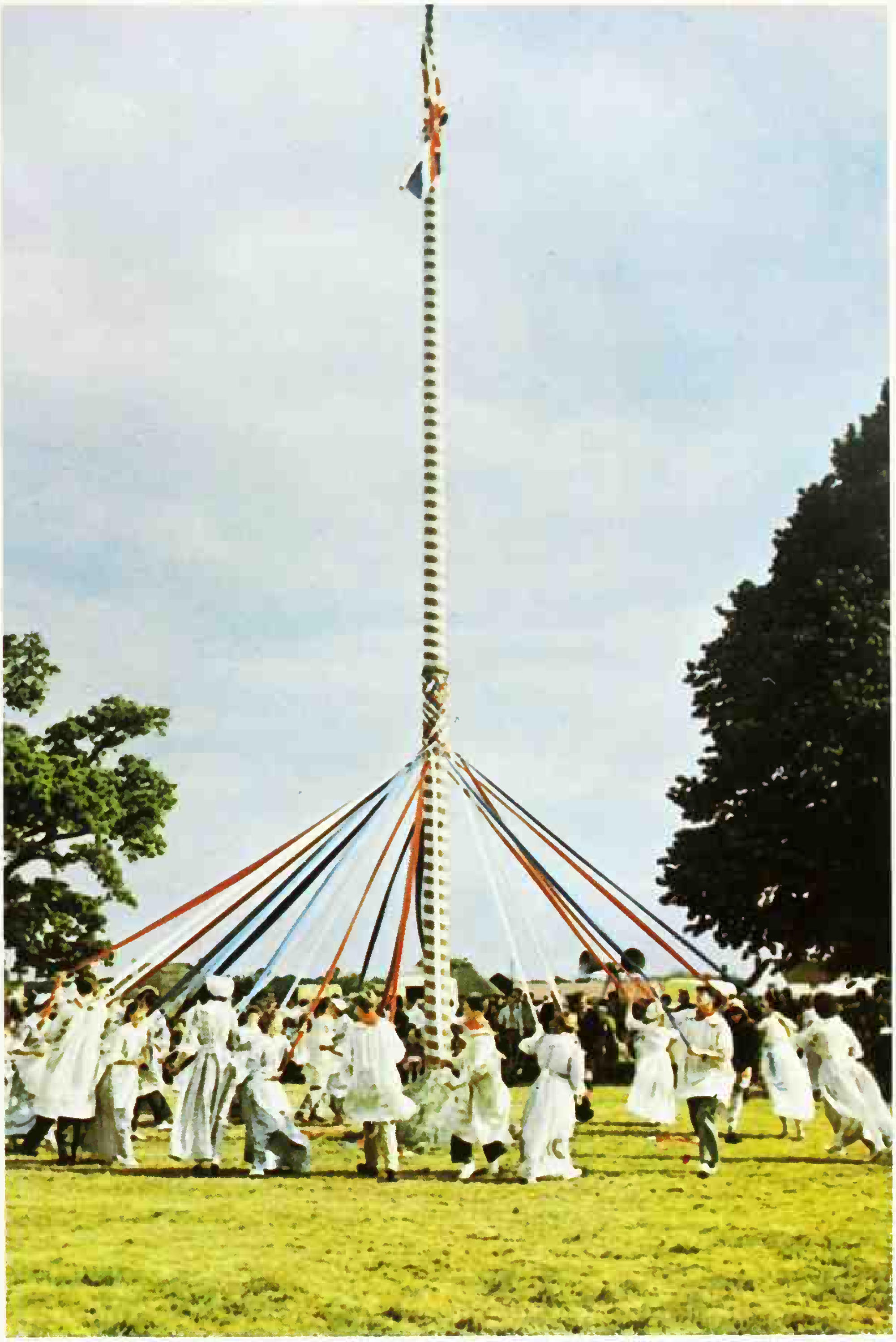
In the ancient Vedic religion of India there is the primordial pair Dyaus Pitar and Prithivi Matar, and in Hinduism Shiva and Shakti, Kali or Durga, Vishnu and Sarasvati, Krishna and Radha; in Egypt (where the pattern is to some extent reversed, the sky being regarded as the goddess Nut, sometimes symbolized as a cow) Osiris and Isis; in Mesopotamia Anu and Ishtar, Marduk and Sarpanitu; in Greece Zeus and Hera; in Scandinavia Frey and Freya. Not all these pairs can simply be identified with sky and earth, but rather with generation and fecundity as universal principles. Either may be dominant; the cult of the bull in the Semitic area and in the Minoan-Mycenean religion of Crete and Greece witnesses to the dominance of the male (see BULL; CRETE), while cow-worship in, for example, Hinduism points in the opposite direction (see COW). The 'mother goddess' figure in particular is capable of many varieties of expression, and may bear many names, as her attributes (the chief of which is that of the 'vessel') are taken over by local goddesses, belonging to the lower orders of the hierarchy.

Human male and female meet in the act of sexual intercourse; and the overall symbolism of fertility gods and goddesses is very frequently derived directly from that act. The great male gods were often represented with an erect phallus (ithyphallic), and mother goddesses either as pregnant, or with exaggerated breasts and labia. Ithyphallic figures are found in Paleolithic cave paintings and in the Bronze Age rock carvings of Scandinavia, as well as in the paintings and sculpture of many pre-literate peoples.

Evidence of phallic cults is found in the civilizations of antiquity: in Greece connected with Hermes, Demeter and Dionysus; in Rome, at the festival of Liberalia; in Egypt, Osiris was a phallic god, and the mysteries of Isis contained phallic elements. Farther north, in the greatest of the pre-Christian Scandinavian temples, that at Old Uppsala, in Sweden, it was recorded by the German writer Adam of Bremen that down to the 11th century the image of the fertility god Frey was ithyphallic. In early India, one of the best known of the seals discovered at the Indus Valley site of Mohenjo-Daro (c 2500 BC) represents a three-faced, horned deity, sitting in a yogic position and surrounded by animals; this figure, which has been identified with the later Shiva, is likewise ithyphallic. In later Hinduism, the phallus *(lingam)* is the symbol of Shiva, and although many Hindus would today contest the origin of the symbol, the evidence of erotic sculptures leaves the matter in little doubt.

Mother goddess symbolism is of many kinds, ranging from great crudity to great sophistication. Among the earliest attempts made by man to represent the symbol of maternity in plastic form are the so-called 'Venuses', rudimentary female figures shaped during the Upper Paleolithic period out of bone, ivory or stone. While their sexual characteristics are greatly exaggerated, their faces are seldom more than hinted at (see FACELESS GODDESSES). The use to which they were put must remain a matter of conjecture, but it seems at least likely that they were fertility charms, the possession of

Left The Wakamba fertility dance is frequently performed in many parts of Kenya. While the women stand in a circle and play on whistles, the men drum, dance and display their physical prowess by performing gymnastic feats, gradually working their way towards the women *Right* May Day celebrations begin with the gathering of flowers and branches and 'bringing home the May', or bringing the new life of spring, into the village. A maypole is erected and festooned, and young girls perform a dance around this phallic symbol



Barnaby's Picture Library

which was believed to bring about the condition they represent, that is, pregnancy.

A somewhat more sophisticated – at the same time more realistic – expression of the principle of fecundity is the figure of the mother and child. Images of this kind are found in Ancient Egypt, and an unbroken line may be drawn from these to modern figures of the Virgin and Child in Christian churches. Of course, the symbol has undergone many modifications in response to theological and other pressures, but its significance is still not far removed from that which it originally possessed – the divine principle of fecundity and motherhood nourishing the 'son of man' from her own body.

Cycle of Birth and Death

In the past it has frequently been believed that children are indeed born from the divine earth, from caves and ravines, springs and wells; and as man is born of the sacred soil, so he must one day return to that same soil from which he once emerged, perhaps to be reborn – the image on which the Greek mysteries depended – perhaps not.

The fact that the divine earth gives birth to man, beast and plant, and also receives the lifeless corpse in burial and decomposition – in other words, that the idea of fertility has as its corollary the idea of destruction – has been responsible for many grim images. Today we are apt to fall back upon abstract notions of the passage of time, such as 'Time, like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away,' but the myth-maker was once less easily satisfied. Particularly in those religions in which the female principle was dominant, in which the body was buried – returned to the womb of the earth – rather than being cremated, the same images which represented fertility also represented death and destruction. So it is that mythology tells how the great mother goddesses descend into the realm of departed spirits – the Mesopotamian Ishtar into the shadowy realm of dust and death, Kore (Persephone) into the House of Hades – symbolizing the annual death of vegetation and the fate awaiting all men. They emerge, however; and in the Greek mysteries, of which the rite of Eleusis may be taken as typical, the initiate may assure himself of immortality by assimilation to the cosmic fertility pattern they represent. Demeter, goddess of Eleusis, presides over birth and death alike, and offers to her devotees the gift of life – eternal life (see DEMETER).

Elsewhere there is hope of reincarnation. The most striking of these ambivalent images is perhaps that of the Hindu goddess Kali, who is undoubtedly a mother goddess but equally a goddess who devours even her consort, Shiva the destroyer. Her tongue protruding, her body wound round with snakes or with ropes of human skulls, her fangs dripping blood, she dances in triumph on the prostrate body of Shiva.

An ancient Hindu marriage ritual contains the words, spoken by the bridegroom, 'I am the sky, you are the earth.' To comprehend the place of fertility in the world of religion and magic one must understand the vast correspondence between the microcosm which is man and the macrocosm which is the universe in which man lives. Both depend for their life and their continuation on the power of the spirit world, and what is done in one reflects in unimaginable ways on the other.

(See also DYING GOD; EARTH; MOTHER GODDESS; PHALLIC SYMBOLISM.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

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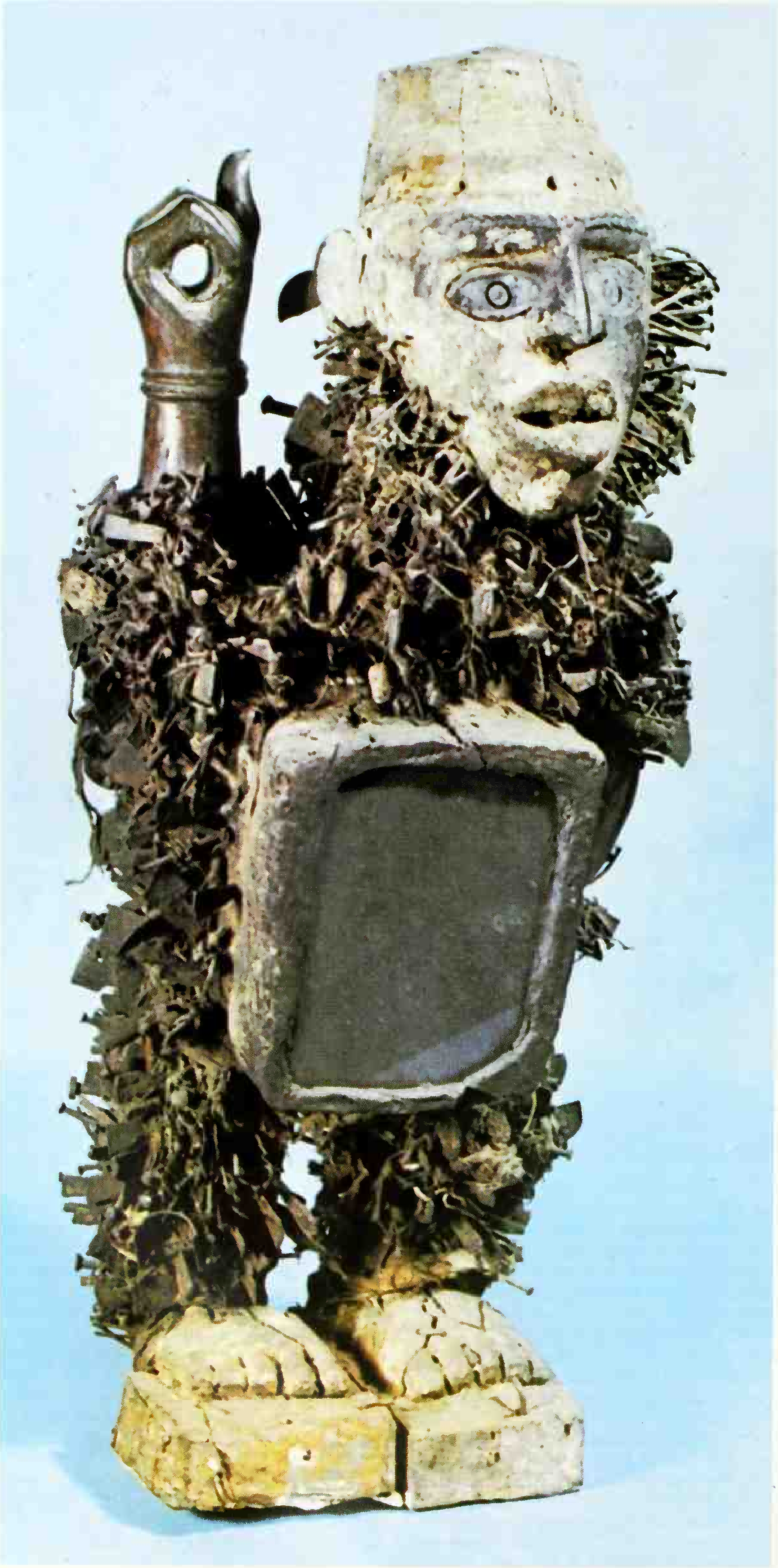


FETISH

A MAGIC CHARM or amulet, worshipped because of its significance to the individual rather than for its physical attributes or for any symbolic value, is called a fetish. It protects the possessor from harm by virtue of its inherent talismanic properties warding off evil. In many parts of Africa the use of these guardian objects has become an important sub-stratum of the established religion, and has earned its own name – fetishism. This cult employs fetishes in two distinct ways. For domestic use, common natural objects with supposed supernatural powers are preserved, rather as the horseshoe or four-leaf clover are valued in parts of the West. Sometimes they are impregnated by the medicine-man with a concoction, the composition of which depends on the intended purpose of the fetish. These objects therefore, not only safeguard, but cure, and they can be anything from teeth to snakes' heads, or may take the form of images of men or animals. Many of the fetishes on the West Coast of Africa are embellished with reflecting glass, an addition dating from the introduction of mirrors by Europeans and the resultant association with 'white man's magic'.

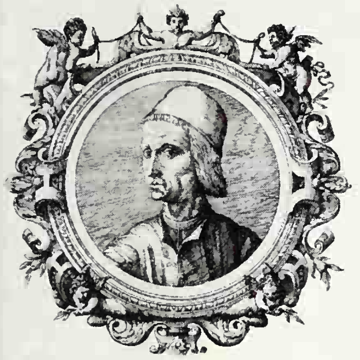
In the second, more social, aspect of the cult, the fetishes are considered to be divine ministers, harbouring the protective powers of the spirit-world. The important fetishes are guarded by fetish-doctors who act as the spirits' representatives. It is the responsibility of each fetish-doctor to carry out the rites and ceremonies appropriate to a particular spirit. In exchange he is protected by his spirit and can make use of some of its power for the benefit of the community at large. Each spirit has its own prescribed function and the fetish-doctors tend therefore to be specialized and cover a narrow field of activity: they may ensure a successful pregnancy, attract or deter alligators, cause or prevent a whirlwind, and so forth. When a native intends to go hunting, he applies first to the fetish-doctor of hunting who supplies him with the necessary charm. Some tribes possess a 'man-panther' fetish-doctor who is consulted to detect criminals and wrong-doers.

As Puckett makes clear in *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro*, the fetish concept was brought to America by the slaves, and for years formed an important sub-stratum of Southern folklore. Fetishes have gone by many names in America – conjures, hoodoos, jacks, goofers – while those who dispense them are perhaps most widely called 'root doctors' or 'conjure doctors'. Though the names are new, the pattern is the same: any object or combination of objects may make up the charm, mainly at the whim of the individual conjure doctor. (See CONJURE MAGIC; TALISMANS.)

Primitive man uses virtually any object as a fetish, as long as he believes it to be endowed with magical properties *Left* Nail fetish from the Bakongo of Portuguese Angola. *Above right* Steel articles for sale as fetishes in Cotonou market, Dahomey

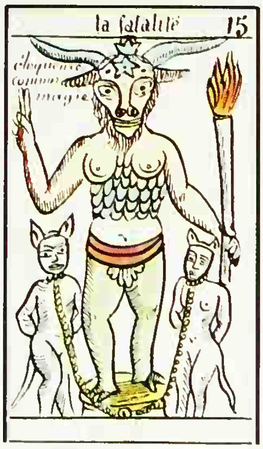
Peter Larsen

Sacred to Bacchus, the fig symbolizes procreation, fecundity and wisdom and has been venerated in many parts of the world



Ficino Marsilio

A Florentine philosopher and doctor who, in 1489, published a medical book, *Libri de Vita*, in which he suggested that a planet's favourable influences could be attracted by concentrating on images or mental pictures, characteristic of that planet's nature, and that these influences could be of great therapeutic value: by meditating, therefore, on a picture of a young girl holding flowers and apples, an image of Venus, the return of health and happiness would be assured.



Fifteen

The number closely associated with sex; sacred to Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of sexual love: reached by multiplying 5, the number of sexual pleasure, with 3, the symbol of genitals: in the Tarot pack, 15 is the card of the Devil, who often appears as a goat, in which form he is identified with lust.
See NUMEROLOGY.

FIG

THE FIRST PLANT mentioned in the Bible, where it occurs 57 times, is the fig, *Ficus carica*: 'Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked; and sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.' Many Biblical references testify to the importance of the fig (as much a symbol of security as a producer of food) such as 'a land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig trees' and 'every man under his vine and under his fig tree.' Its attractions as a fruit were praised by Mohammed, 'If I should wish a fruit brought to Paradise it would certainly be the fig.'

Besides being man's first garment – an attribute sometimes adopted by sculptors to conceal the private parts of their nude figures – there are legends which suggest that the fig – which belongs to the same family as the mulberry, hop, breadfruit and Indian hemp – was in fact the Forbidden Fruit rather than the apple which is traditionally associated with Eve (see APPLE). This would be in keeping with the mysterious and slightly suggestive appearance of the pear-shaped receptacle commonly referred to as the fruit, inside which are numerous tiny flowers, the only access for pollinating insects being a small opening at the end. As D. H. Lawrence wrote:

> The Italians vulgarly say, it stands for the female part; the fig fruit:
> The fissure, the yoni,
> The wonderful moist conductivity towards the centre.

One suggestion is that the incident of the Forbidden Fruit, with Adam and Eve and the aprons they subsequently made, is based on an ancient custom associated with the pollination of fig trees, during which those involved wore the tree's leaves. It has also been suggested that those carrying out the pollination were afterwards sacrificed as scapegoats, a theme which has a parallel in ancient Greece, where according to

Frazer: 'the Athenians regularly maintained a number of degraded and useless beings at the public expense; and when any calamity such as plague, drought or famine befell the city, they sacrificed two of these outcasts as scapegoats. One of the victims was sacrificed for the men and the other for the women. The former wore round his neck a string of black and the latter of white figs.' In Asia Minor the scapegoat, once again sacrificed if calamity struck, was first made to eat bread, cheese and dried figs; he was then beaten on the genitals with squills and fig branches and was finally burned on a pyre.

Legends of the Fig

Another fig tree with Biblical associations was one, for centuries pointed out to visitors, under which the Holy Family was supposed to have rested on their flight into Egypt. This gave rise to a legend of a fig opening its trunk as a refuge to Mary and the infant Jesus when pursued by Herod's soldiers. The fig is also one of the many trees on which Judas is supposed to have hung himself and hence in some places, notably Sicily, a plant of ill omen.

Roman mythology brings in the fig several times, although in widely differing contexts. In one legend the Titan Lyceus, pursued by Jupiter, was transformed into a fig tree by Rhea, mother of the gods. Rhea's husband Saturn is elsewhere associated with the fig's creation, and for this reason the inhabitants of Cyrene crowned Saturn's statue with fig-wreaths. Bacchus is credited with creating the fig, which was therefore sacred to him; and certainly, during Bacchanalian festivities, the fig shared the honours with the vine, and Bacchus's virility was credited to it. Female votaries on these occasions wore necklets made from dried figs, while men carried statues of the phallic god Priapus carved from fig wood.

The Romans believed a fig tree to be responsible for the siting of Rome, as the cradle in which Romulus and Remus arrived became lodged in the roots of a fig on the banks of the Tiber. The resulting veneration for the fig can be traced over four centuries. This sacred tree became known as *Ficus ruminalis*. Ruminus was the surname of Jupiter, provider of mankind's food, while Rumina was goddess of the female breast. This strengthened the Bacchic connection in making the fig symbolic of fecundity and procreation, and it was sacred to Juno as goddess presiding over marriages.

There are hundreds of species of fig and it is interesting that many of these are revered as Trees of Life and of Knowledge or, as in Central Africa, haunts of ancestor spirits. To Buddhists the most sacred tree was the Bo-tree, *Ficus religiosa*, because under it Buddha found wisdom. To his followers it combined the attributes of creation, wisdom and preparation for the afterlife. Mythologically it became a tree of creation, the *Asvattha*, sheltering the world – resembling the Nordic Ash *Yggdrasill*. The Asvattha's flower held ambrosia, bringer of intelligence to the eater. There are sacred Bo-trees all over India and, in the past at least, in China, some undoubtedly of enormous age. The famous specimen at Anurâdhapura, Ceylon, is reputed to have grown from a branch taken from Buddha's original Bo-tree, and planted in 288 BC.

Buddha is also reputed by the Chinese to have meditated under the Banyan, *Ficus bengalensis*, the tree under which Vishnu was born. One of its Sanskrit names is Bahupâda, the Tree of Many Feet, which drops vertical roots from spreading branches so that, over the centuries, a single specimen makes a whole grove of trunks. Like the Bo-tree, the Banyan seems imperishable, and on the Narbada river, near Surat in central India, is one reputed to be over 3000 years old, which is said to have been visited by Nearchus, an officer of Alexander the Great.

In the Victorian 'language of flowers' the fig meant 'to be prolific' – shades of Bacchus – while dried figs were an unlucky gift to a woman. To dream of figs should mean happiness, riches, long life and wishes fulfilled. A belief from the American South seems to deny the tree's positive value, saying that if you fall out of a fig tree, any injuries received will never heal. But American folk medicine reaffirms the fig's value: boiled in milk it will cure quinsy, the juice will cure warts, and it is claimed that figs will cure cancer.

Sacred fig or Bo-tree at Buddh Gaya in India: it was under a Bo-tree that the Buddha first received enlightenment